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JANUARY 1957

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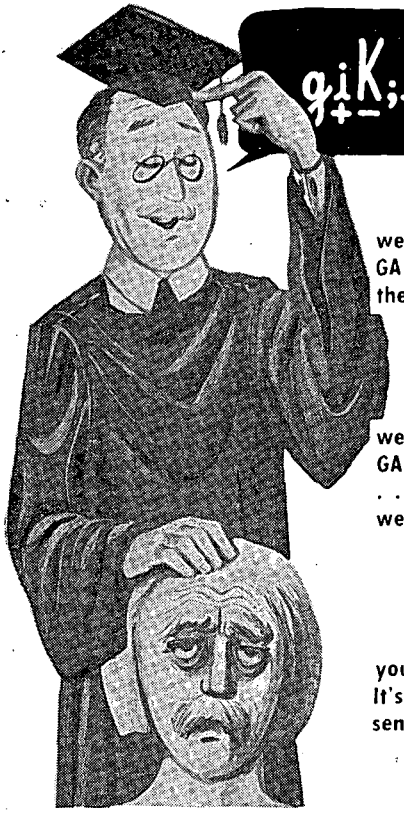

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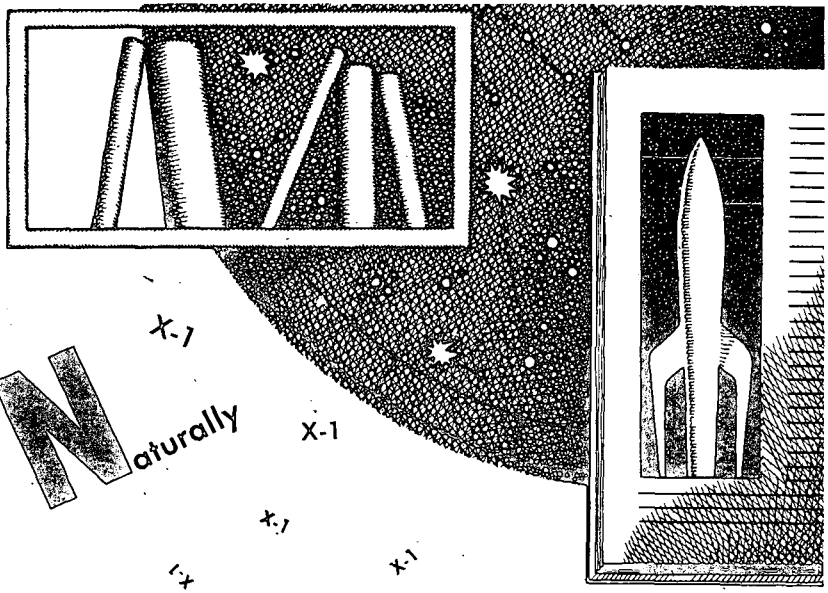

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JANUARY, 1957 VOL. 13, NO. 3

Galaxy

SCIENCE FICTION

ALL ORIGINAL STORIES • NO REPRINTS!

CONTENTS

NOVELETS

MORAL EQUIVALENT ..... *by Kris Neville* 6
BUTTERFLY 9 ..... *by Donald Keith* 50

SHORT STORIES

ALL JACKSON'S CHILDREN ..... *by Daniel F. Galouye* 30
THE HAUNTED CORPSE ..... *by Frederik Pohl* 72

BOOK-LENGTH SERIAL—Conclusion

THE STARS MY DESTINATION ..... *by Alfred Bester* 98

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

FOR YOUR INFORMATION ..... *by Willy Ley* 87
Tracking Down the Sea Serpent (Part II)

FEATURES

EDITOR'S PAGE ..... *by H. L. Gold* 4
GALAXY'S FIVE STAR SHELF ..... *by Floyd C. Gale* 46
FORECAST 71

Cover by EMSH Offering SEASON'S GREETINGS TO OUR READERS

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TREASURER'S REPORT

QUITE a number of readers write in each month asking for the latest facts on GALAXY.

Well, it's true — I haven't submitted a Treasurer's Report in several years. I wasn't sure you were interested. Now that enough requests have come in to indicate you are, here's the picture:

Circulation: Doing very nicely; still leading all competition and growing comfortably. Like every publication, of course, we could use more sales, which depends on dealers ordering copies and displaying them up front. If your dealer doesn't carry GALAXY, or if he does but hides it in a pile, we'd much appreciate your telling him he is missing a profitable bet. So will he. And so will you, because the larger our circulation, the better magazine we can put out. As for instance:

Covers: After years of experimentation, we've finally come up with what seems to be the ideal solution — by widening the left-hand band a bit, we can feature stories and Willy Ley's articles without cutting at all into the picture area — *and* without noticeably reducing the size of the picture. Took considerable juggling, but we worked it out at last.

Costs: Up and up. That sounds like your budget and mine, but there are important differences. Production expenses, though on about the same increase as our budgets, don't fluctuate; they are high and they keep going higher. Paper, for instance. More and more pulpwood is going into industrial papers, where the profit is greater, which slashes the supply of printing paper, thus driving up the price. A very startling incidental fact: Printing paper accounts for less than 5% of all the paper made! The big 95% is wrapping paper of all sorts, bags, cartons, toweling, tissues, construction paper, maché, board and so forth.

Subscriptions: We still have several times as many as our nearest competitor, but we'd naturally like to have more. To get them, we realize we have to offer an attractive deal — and we do. Besides saving you money, we mail copies flat in a strong envelope (raises the cost, but worth it) and rush them out

(*Continued on Page* 144)

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MORAL

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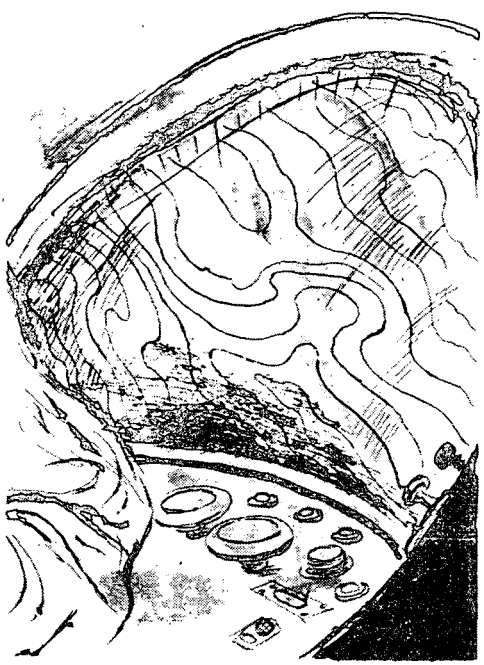
EQUIVALENT

By KRIS NEVILLE

Why shouldn't a culture mimic another right down to the last little detail? Because the last detail may be just that — the final one!

Illustrated by DICK FRANCIS



THE planet Lanit II had dwindled to a luminous speck. They were in clear space now, at Breakoff Point. Beliakoff held the ship in position while Kelly set dials for the jump into the hyperspatial drift opening, which deep-space men knew as the Slot.

Beliakoff cracked his bony knuckles nervously. "Now, Johnny," he said, "easy this time. *Real* easy. Gentle her into it. She's not a new ship. She resents being slammed into the Slot."

"She'll take it," Kelly said, with a boyish grin of almost suicidal abandon.

"Maybe she will, but how about us? You sort of creased the Slot getting us off Torriang. A little closer and —"

"I was still getting the touch.

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You ought to be glad I'm an instinctive astrogator."

He set the last dial with a rapid twirl and reached for the kissoff switch.

"You're out two decimal points," said Beliakoff, who worried about such trifles. "Enough to ionize us."

"I know, I know," Kelly grumbled, adjusting the dial. "I was just touching it for luck. Here we go!"

He depressed the kissoff switch. Beliakoff shut his eyes as the ship lurched Slotward, wishing that Kyne, their government-inspected, college-graduated astrogator was still aboard. Kyne had been an expert at the job. But then, three planets back, he had suddenly gone after a native stevedore with a micro-edge cleaver, screaming that no dirty alien would ever marry *his* daughter.

Kyne had no daughter.

Currently he was confined in Azolith, awaiting transportation Earthside, to a padded little homy room in the Spaceman's Snug Port.

"HOW about that?" Kelly asked proudly, once the ship was locked in hyperspace. "Superior intelligence and steel nerves do the trick every time."

"Poor devil, Kyne," Beliakoff sighed.

"A paranoid," Kelly diagnosed. "Did he ever tell you about the plot to keep him out of the Luna Military Academy?"

"He never talked to me much.

"That's because you're a cold distant, unsympathetic type,' Kelly said, with a complacent smile. "Me he told everything. He applied to Luna every year. Studied all the textbooks on military organizaton, land tactics, sea tactics, space strategy, histories of warfare. Crammed his cabin with that junk. Knew it inside out. Fantastic memory!"

"Why didn't he get in?"

"Hemophilia. He couldn't pass the physical. He thought they were plotting against him. Still, I'm grateful for the chance at a little astrogation." With the barest hint of a smile, Kelly said, "I understand it's possible to bring a ship sidewise through the Slot at Terra."

"Please don't try," Beliakoff begged, shuddering. "I knew we should have waited for Kyne's replacement at Mala."

"We'd still be there, with a cargo of kvash turning sour."

"I was afraid it would sour anyhow," Beliakoff said, with a worrier's knack for finding trouble. "Mala is the slowest loading port this side of the Rift. I must admit, however, they didn't do badly this time."

"Noticed that, did you?" Kelly asked.

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"Hm? Did you find a way of speeding them up?"

"Sure. Gave them Kyne's old dog-eared books. They're crazy about books. Really hustled for them."

Beliakoff said nothing for several seconds, but his long, sallow face became pale. "You what?"

"Gave 'em the books. Don't worry," Kelly said quickly. "Kyne gave them to me before they hauled him away."

"You gave the *warfare books* to the people on Mala?"

"You mean I shouldn't have? Why not? What's wrong with Mala?"

"Plenty." Beliakoff grimly did some quick figuring. "It'll be a year, their time, when we can get back. Kelly, take us out of hyperspace!"

"Now?" Kelly gasped. "Here?"

"At once!"

"But we might come out inside a star or —"

"That," Beliakoff said, his voice filled with righteousness, "simply cannot be helped. We must return at once to Mala!"

GENERAL DRAK, Commander of the Forces of the Empress, Wearer of the Gold Star of Mala, sat at his desk in the Supreme Command Post, which had recently been converted from a hardware store. He was engaged in a fiery argument over the telephone with Nob, the Empress's right-hand man.

"But damn it all," General Drak shouted, "I must have it! I am the Supreme Commander, the General of All the Armies of the Dictatorship! Doesn't that mean anything?"

"Not under the circumstances," Nob answered.

Two soldiers, standing guard in the General's quarters, listened interestedly.

"Think he'll get it?" one asked.

"Not a chance," the other answered.

Drak glared them into silence, then returned to the argument. "Will you please attempt to understand my position?" he said hoarsely. "You put me in command. At my orders, the Armies of the Dictatorship move against the Allied Democracies. All the other generals obey me. *Me!* Correct?"

"He's got a point," one soldier said.

"He'll never get it," the other replied.

"Shut up, you two!" Drak roared. "Nob, aren't I right? It's the Earthly way, Nob. Authority must be recognized!"

"I'm sorry," Nob said. "Extremely sorry. Personally, I sympathize with you. But the *Book of Terran Rank Equivalents* is quite specific. Seven shoulder stars are the most — the absolute

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most – that any general can wear. I absolutely cannot allow you to wear eight."

"But you gave Frix seven! And he's just Unit General!"

"That was before we understood the rules completely. We thought there was no limit to the number of stars we could give and Frix was sulky. I'm sorry, General, you'll just have to be satisfied with seven."

"Take one away from Frix, then."

"Can't. He'll resign."

"In that case, I resign."

"You aren't allowed to. The book, *Military Leadership*, specifically states that a Supreme Commander never resigns during hostilities. An Earthman would find the very thought inconceivable."

"All right!" Drak furiously slammed down the telephone.

The two soldiers exchanged winks.

"At attention, you two," Drak said. "You're supposed to be honor guards. Why can't you act like honor guards?"

"We haven't got weapons," one of the soldiers pointed out.

"Can't be helped. I sent what we had to the front."

"But we need them here," the soldier said earnestly. "It's bad for morale, us not having weapons, and morale is vital for victory."

Drak hated to be lectured, but he had to accept textbook truth when it was quoted at him.

"You may be right," he agreed. "I'll try to get some back."

He rubbed his eyes tiredly. Everything had happened so quickly!

JUST A week ago, Nob had walked into his store and inquired, "Drak, how would you like to be a general?"

"I don't know," Drak had confessed honestly. "What is it and why do we need one?"

"War starting," Nob said. "You've heard of war, haven't you? Earth idea, *very* Earthly. I'll explain later how it works. What do you say?"

"All right. But do you really think I'm the right type?"

"Absolutely. Besides, your hardware store is perfectly situated for the Supreme Command Post."

But aside from the location of his hardware store, Drak had other qualifications for leadership. For one thing, he looked like an Earth general and this had loomed large in Nob's eyes. Drak was over six feet tall, strongly built, solidly muscled. His eyes were gray, deep-set and fierce; his nose was aquiline; his mouth was firm because he usually held nails in it when he was out on a repair job.

In his uniform, Drak looked every inch a general; as a matter

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of fact, he looked like several generals, for his cap came from the Earth-Mars war of '82, his tunic was a relic of the D'eereli Campaign, his belt was in the style of the Third Empire, his pants were a replica of the Southern Star Front, while his shoes reminded one of the hectic days of the Fanzani Rebellion.

But at least all his clothes were soldiers' clothes. His honor guard had to piece out their uniforms with personal articles. They had complained bitterly about the injustice of this, and had come close to deserting. But Drak, after some hasty reading in Smogget's *Leadership,* told them about the Terran doctrine of the Privileges of Rank.

In front of him now was a report from the Allani Battle Front. He wasn't sure what it said, since it was coded and he had neglected to write down the code. Was it ENEMY REPULSED US WITH HEAVY LOSSES or should it read US REPULSED ENEMY WITH HEAVY LOSSES?

He wished he knew. It made quite a difference.

The door burst open and a young corporal rushed in. "Hey, General, take a look out the window!"

Drak started to rise, then reconsidered. Rules were rules.

"Hey, what?" he demanded.

"Forgot," the corporal said. "Hey, *sir,* take a look out the window, huh?"

"Much better." Drak walked to the window and saw, in the distance, a mass of ascending black smoke.

"City of Chando," the corporal said proudly. "Boy, we smacked it today! Saturation bombing for ten hours. They can't use it for anything but a gravel pit now!"

"Sir," Drak reminded.

"Sir. The planes are fueled up and waiting. What shall we flatten next, huh, sir?"

"Let me see . . ." General Drak examined a wall map upon which the important enemy cities were circled in red. There were Alis and Dryn, Kys and Mos and Dlettre. Drak could think of no reason for leveling one more than another. After a moment's thought, he pushed a button on his desk.

"Yeah?" asked a voice over the loudspeaker.

"Which one, Ingif?"

"Kys, of course," said the cracked voice of his old hardware store assistant. "Fellow over there owes us money and won't pay up."

"Thanks, Ingif." Drak turned to the corporal. "Go to it, soldier!"

"Yes, sir!"

The corporal hurried out.

General Drak turned back to the reports on his desk, trying again to puzzle out what had hap-

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pened at Allani. Repulsed Us? Us Repulsed? How should it read?

"Oh, well," Drak said resignedly. "In the long run, I don't suppose it really makes much difference."

* * *

Miles away, in no man's land, stood a bunker of reinforced concrete and steel. Within the bunker were two men. They sat on opposite sides of a plain wooden table and their faces were stern and impassive. Beside each man was a pad and pencil. Upon each pad were marks.

Upon the table between them was a coin.

"Your toss," said the man on the right.

The man on the left picked up the coin. "Call it."

"Heads."

It came up heads.

"Damn," said the flipper, passing the coin across the table and standing up.

The other man smiled faintly, but said nothing.

KELLY reached for the kissoff switch, then hesitated. "Look, Igor," he said, "do we have to come out now, without charts? It gets risky, you know. How can we tell what's out there in normal space?"

"It is a risk we have to take," Beliakoff said stonily.

"But why? What's wrong with the people of Mala having those books? Believe me, there's nothing dirty in them."

"Look," Beliakoff said patiently, "you know that Mala is a semi-restricted planet. Limited trading is allowed under control conditions. No articles are allowed on the planet except those on the approved list."

"Yeah," Kelly said vaguely. "Silly sort of rule."

"Not at all. Mala is a mirror culture. They consider Earth and its ways to be absolute perfection. They copy everything of Earth's they can find."

"Seems like a good idea. We *have* got a real good culture."

"Sure, but we developed into it. The Malans simply copy what they see, with no underlying tradition or rationale. Since they don't know why they're doing any particular thing, they can easily misinterpret it, warp it into something harmful."

"They'll learn," Kelly said.

"Of course they will. But in the meantime, the results can be devastating. They always are when a primitive race tries to ape the culture of a more advanced people. Look at what happened to the South Sea Islanders. All they picked up was the worst of French, British and American culture. You hardly see any more South Sea Islanders, do you? Same with the American Indians,

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with the Hottentots, and plenty of others."

"I still think you're making too much of a fuss about it," Kelly said. "All right, I gave them a lot of books on warfare and political organization. So what? What in blazes can they do with them?"

"The Malans," Beliakoff said grimly, "have never had a war."

Kelly gulped. "Never?"

"Never. They're a completely cooperative society. Or were, before they started reading those warfare books."

"But they wouldn't start a war just because they've got some books on it, and know that Earth people do it, and—yeah, I guess they would." Quickly he set the dials. "You're right, buddy. We have an absolute moral obligation to return and straighten out that mess."

"I knew you'd see it that way," Beliakoff said approvingly. "And there is the additional fact that the Galactic Council could hold us responsible for any deaths traceable to the books. It could mean Ran-hachi Prison for a hundred years or so."

"Why didn't you say that in the first place?" Kelly flipped the kissoff switch. The ship came out in normal space. Fortunately, there was no sun or planet in its path.

"Hang on," Kelly said, "we're going where we're going in a great big rush!"

"I just hope we'll be in time to salvage something," Beliakoff said, watching as their freighter plowed its way through the sea of space toward the unchanging stars.

WITH evident nervousness, Nob walked down a long, dim corridor toward the imperial chambers, carrying a small package in both hands. The Prime Minister of the Dictatorship was a small bald man with a great bulging forehead and small, glittering black eyes, made smaller by steel-rimmed spectacles. He looked the very incarnation of an evil genius, which was why he had been chosen as the Power Behind the Throne.

In point of fact, however, Nob was a mild, near-sighted, well-meaning little man, a lawyer by occupation, known throughout Mala for his prize rose gardens and his collection of Earth stamps. In spite of a temperamental handicap, he didn't find his new job too difficult. The Earth books were there and Nob simply interpreted them as literally as possible. Whenever a problem came up, Nob thought: how would they solve it on Earth? Then he would do the same, or as near the same as possible.

But dealing with the Empress presented problems of a unique

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nature. Nob couldn't find a book entitled *Ways and Means of Placating Royalty*. If such a book were obtainable, Nob would have paid any price for it.

He took a deep breath, knocked and opened the door into the Royal Chambers.

Instantly he ducked. A vase shattered against the wall behind him. Not so good, he thought, calculating the distance by which it had missed him. The Empress Jusa's aim was improving.

"Nob, you dirty swine!" the Empress shrieked.

"At your service, Majesty," Nob answered, bowing low.

"Where are the pearls, you insolent dolt?"

"Here, Majesty," Nob said, handing over the package. "It strained the exchequer, buying them for you. The Minister of the Treasury threatened to desert to the enemy. He may still. The people are muttering about extravagance in high places. But the pearls are yours, Majesty."

"Of course." Jusa opened the package and looked at the lustrous gems. "Can I keep them?" she asked, in a very small voice.

"Of course not."

"I didn't think so," Jusa said sadly. She had been just another

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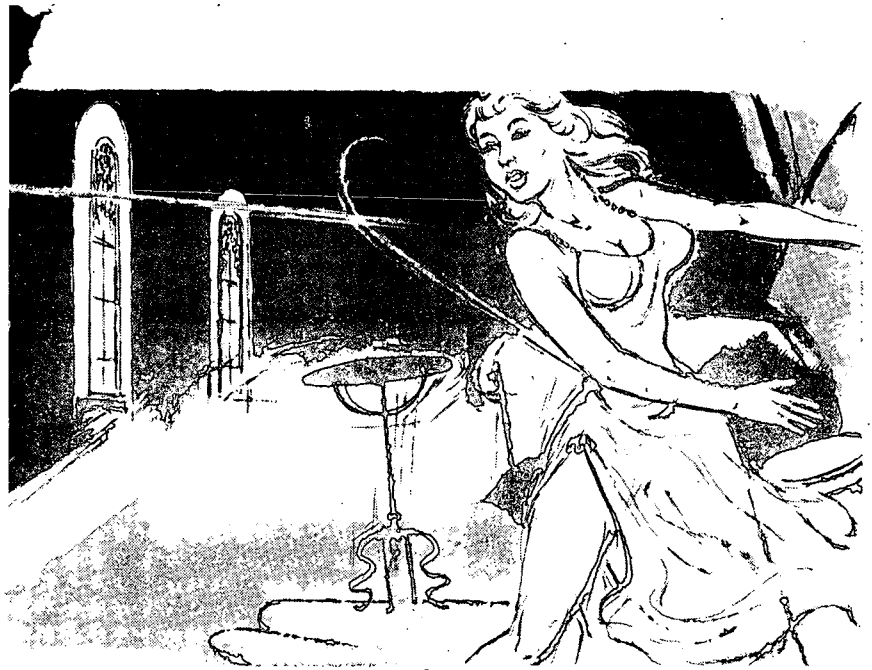

Malan girl, but had been chosen as Empress on the basis of her looks, which were heartbreakingly lovely. It was axiomatic that an Empress should be heartbreakingly lovely. The Malans had seen enough Earth films to know that.

But an Empress should also be cold, calculating, cruel, as well as gracious, headstrong and generous to a fault. She should care nothing for her people, while, simultaneously, all she cared for was the people. She should act in a manner calculated to make her subjects love her in spite of and because of herself.

JUSA was a girl of considerable intelligence and she wanted to be as Earthly as the next. But the contradictions in her role baffled her.

"Can't I keep them just for a little while?" she pleaded, holding a single pearl up to the light.

"It isn't possible," Nob said. "We need guns, tanks, planes. Therefore you sell your jewelry. There are many Terran precedents."

"But why did I have to insist upon the pearls in the first place?" Jusa asked.

"I explained! As Empress, you must be flighty, must possess a

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whim of iron, must have no regard for anyone else's feelings, must lust for expensive baubles."

"All right," Jusa said.

"All right, what?"

"All right, swine."

"That's better," Nob said. "You're learning, Jusa, you really are. If you could just fluctuate your moods more consistently—"

"I really will try," promised the Empress. "I'll learn, Nob. You'll be proud of me yet."

"Good. Now there are some problems of state which you must decide upon. Prisoners of war, for one thing. We have several possible means for disposing of them. First, we could—"

"You take care of it."

"Now, now," Nob chided. "Mustn't shirk your duty."

"I'm not. I am simply being arbitrary and dictatorial. *You* solve it, pig. And bring me diamonds."

"Yes, Excellency," Nob said, bowing low. "Diamonds. But the people—"

"I love the people. But to hell with them!" she cried, fire in her eyes.

"Fine, fine," Nob said, and bowed his way out of the room.

Jusa stood for a few moments in thought, then picked up a vase and shattered it on the floor. She made a mental note to order several dozen more.

Then she flung herself upon the royal couch and began to weep bitterly.

She was quite a young Empress and she had the feeling of being in beyond her depth. The problems of the war and of royalty had completely ended her social life.

She resented it; any girl would.

NOB, meanwhile, left the palace and went home in his armored car. The car had been ordered to protect him against assassins, who, according to the Earth books, aimed a good deal of their plots at Prime Ministers. Nob could see no reason for this, since if he weren't Prime Minister, any one of a thousand men could do the job with equal efficiency. But he supposed it had a certain symbolic meaning.

He reached his home and his wife kissed him on the cheek. "Hard day at the palace, dear?" she asked.

"Quite hard," Nob said. "Lots of work for after supper."

"It just isn't fair," complained his wife. She was a plump, pleasant little person and she worried continually about her husband's health. "They shouldn't make you work so hard."

"But of course they should!" said Nob, a little astonished. "Don't you remember what I told you? All the books say that during a war, a Prime Minister is a har-

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ried, harassed individual, weighed down by the enormous burden of state, unable to relax, tense with the numerous strains of high office."

"It isn't fair," his wife repeated.

"No one said it was. But it's extremely Earthlike."

His wife shrugged her shoulders. "Well, of course, if it's Earthlike, it must be right. Come eat supper, dear."

AFTER eating, Nob attacked his mounds of paperwork. But soon he was yawning and his eyes burned. He turned to his wife, who was just finishing the dishes.

"My dear," he said, "do you suppose you could help me?"

"Is it proper?" she asked.

"Oh, absolutely. The books state that the Prime Minister's wife tries in every way possible to relieve her husband of the burden of power."

"In that case, I'll be happy to try." She sat down in front of the great pile of papers. "But, dear, I don't know anything about these matters."

"Rely on instinct," Nob answered, yawning. "That's what I do."

Flattered by the importance of her task, she set to work with a will.

Several hours later, she awakened her husband, who was slumbering on the couch.

"I've got them all finished except these," she said. "In this one, I'm afraid I don't understand that word."

Nob glanced at the paper. "Oh, propaganda. That means giving the people the facts, whether true or false. It's very important in any war."

"I don't see why."

"It's obvious. To have a genuine Earth-style war, you need ideological differences. That's why we chose a dictatorship and the other continent chose a democracy. The job of propaganda is to keep us different."

"I see," she said dubiously. "Well, this other paper is from General Heglm of Security. He asks what you are doing about the spy situation. He says it's very serious."

"I had forgotten about that. He's right, it's reached a crisis point." He put the paper in his pocket. "I'm going to take care of that personally, first thing in the morning."

In the last few hours, his wife had made no less than eight Major Policy Decisions, twenty Codifications, eight Unifications, and three Clarifications. Nob didn't bother to read them over. He trusted his wife's good judgment and common sense.

He went to bed that night with the feeling of a job well done. And before he fell asleep, he figured

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out exactly what he would do about the spy situation.

THE next morning, Nob's orders went out by all means of communication. The results were gratifyingly swift, since the people of the dictatorship were completely behind the war and dutifully loved and hated their Empress, in whose name the order was signed.

A typical scene took place in the clubcar of the Char-Xil express. The occupants of the car, twenty-three commuting businessmen, sealed the doors as soon as they received Nob's order. The best-read among them, a salesman by the name of Thrang, was elected spokesman for the group.

"Boys," said Thrang, "I guess I don't have to tell you anything about the importance of this order. We all know what war is by now, don't we?"

"We sure do!"

"War is hell!"

"The war that the enemy thrust on us!"

"The war to start all wars!"

"That's right," Thrang said. "And I guess we've all felt the pinch since the war started. Eh, boys?"

"I've done my part," said a man named Draxil. "When the Prime Minister called for a cigarette shortage, I dumped twenty carloads of tobacco in the Hunto River. Now we got cigarette rationing!"

"That's the spirit," Thrang said. "I know for a fact that others among you have done the same with sugar, canned goods, butter, meat and a hundred items. Everything's rationed now; everyone feels the pinch. But, boys, there's still more we have to do. Now a spy situation has come up and it calls for quick action."

"Haven't we done enough?" groaned a clothing-store owner.

"It's never enough! In time of war, Earth people give till it hurts — then give some more! They know that no sacrifice is too much, that nothing counts but the proper prosecution of the war."

The clothing-store owner nodded vehemently. "If it's Earthly, it's good enough for me. So what can we do about this spy situation?"

"That is for us to decide here and now," Thrang said. "According to the Prime Minister, our dictatorship cannot boast a single act of espionage or sabotage done to it since the beginning of the war. The Chief of Security is alarmed. It's his job to keep all spies under surveillance. Since there are none, his department has lost all morale, which, in turn, affects the other departments."

"Do we really need spies?"

"They serve a vital purpose," Thrang explained. "All the books

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agree on this. Spies keep a country alert, on its toes, eternally vigilant. Through sabotage, they cut down on arms production, which otherwise would grow absurdly large, since it has priority over everything else. They supply Security with subjects for Interrogation, Confession, Brainwashing and Re-indoctrination. This in turn supplies data for the enemy propaganda machine, which in turn supplies material for our counter-propaganda machine."

DRAXIL looked awed. "I didn't know it was so complicated."

"That's the beauty of the Earth War," Thrang said. "Stupendous yet delicate complications, completely interrelated. Leave out one seemingly unimportant detail and the whole structure collapses."

"Those Terrans!" Draxil said, shaking his head in admiration.

"Now to work. Boys, I'm calling for volunteers. Who'll be a spy?"

No one responded.

"Really now!" said Thrang. "That's no attitude to take. Come on, some of you must be harboring treasonous thoughts. Don't be ashamed of it. Remember, it takes all kinds to make a war."

Little Herg, a zipper salesman from Xcoth, cleared his throat. "I have a cousin who's Minister of War for the Allies."

"An excellent motive for subversion!" Thrang cried.

"I rather thought it was," the zipper salesman said, pleased. "Yes, I believe I can handle the job."

"Splendid!" Thrang said.

By then, the train had arrived at the station. The doors were unsealed, allowing the commuters to leave for their jobs. Thrang watched the zipper salesman depart, then hurried into the crowd. In a moment, he found a tall man wearing a slouch hat and dark glasses. On his lapel was a silver badge which read *Secret Police.*

"See that man?" Thrang asked, pointing to the zipper salesman.

"You bet," the Secret Policeman said.

"He's a spy! A dirty spy! Quick, after him!"

"He's being watched," said the Secret Policeman laconically.

"I just wanted to make sure," Thrang said, and started to walk off.

He felt a heavy hand on his shoulder. He turned. The Secret Policeman had been joined by two tall men in slouch hats and dark glasses. They wore badges that said *Storm Troopers.*

"You're under arrest," said the Secret Policeman.

"Why? What have I done?"

"Not a thing, as far as we know," said a Storm Trooper. "Not a single solitary thing.

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That's why we're arresting you."

"Arbitrary police powers," the Secret Policeman explained. "Suspension of search warrants and habeas corpus. Invasion of privacy. War, you know. Come along quietly, sir. You have a special and very important part to play in the war effort."

'What's that?"

"You have been arbitrarily selected as Martyr," said the Secret Policeman.

Head held high, Thrang marched proudly to his destiny.

THE whole of Mala took to war with a will. Soon books began to appear on the stalls: *War and You* for the masses, *The Erotic Release of War* for the elite, *The Inherent Will to Destroy* for philosophers, and *War and Civilization* for scholars. Volumes of personal experiences sold well. Among them was an account of daring sabotage by a former zipper salesman, and the dramatic story of the Martyrdom of Thrang.

War eliminated a thousand old institutions and unburdened the people of the heavy hand of tradition. War demonstrated clearly that everything was as temporary as a match-flash except Art and Man, because cities, buildings, parks, vehicles, hills, museums, monuments were as whispers of dust after the bombers had gone.

Among the proletariat, the prevailing opinion was voiced by Zun, who was quoted as saying at a war plant party, "Well, there ain't nothin' in the stores I can buy. But I never made so much money in my life!"

In the universities, professors boned up on the subject in order to fit themselves for Chairs of War that were sure to be endowed. All they had to do was wait until the recent crop of war profiteers were taxed into becoming philanthropists, or driven to it by the sense of guilt that the books assured them they would feel.

Armies grew. Soldiers learned to paint, salute, curse, appreciate home cooking, play poker, and fit themselves in every way for the post-war civilian life. They broadened themselves with travel and got a welcome vacation from home and hearth.

War, the Malans agreed, was certainly one of the cleverest of Earth institutions and as educational as it was entertaining.

"NOPE," Beliakoff was saying, "you wouldn't like Ranhachi Prison, not one little bit. It's on Mercury, you know, in the twilight zone. You blister by day and you freeze by night. Only two men have escaped from Ranhachi in the last hundred years, and one of them figured his curve

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wrong and flipped into Sol."

"What about the other one?" Kelly asked, perspiring lightly.

"His gyros fused. He was bound straight for the Coal Sack. Take him a couple of thousand years to get there, at his speed," Beliakoff finished dreamily. "No, Johnny, you wouldn't like Ran-hachi."

"Okay, okay," Kelly said. "The death penalty would be better."

"They give that only as a measure of extreme clemency," Beliakoff said with gloomy Slavic satisfaction.

"Enough! We'll straighten out Mala." There was more hope than conviction in Kelly's voice. "Thar she lies, off to starboard."

Mala was a tiny blue and brown sphere, suddenly growing larger in their screens.

Their radio blared on the emergency channel.

Kelly swore. "That's the Galactic patrol boat from Azolith. What's he doing here?"

"Blockade," said Beliakoff. "Standard practice to quarantine a planet at war. We can't touch down legally until the war's declared over."

"Nuts. We're going down." Kelly touched the controls and the freighter began to descend into the interdicted area.

"Attention, freighter!" the radio blasted. "This is the interdictory ship *Moth*. Heave to and identify yourself."

Beliakoff answered promptly in the Propendium language. "Let's see 'em unscramble *that*," he said to Kelly. They continued their descent.

After a while, a voice from the patrol boat said in Propendium, "Attention, freighter! You are entering an interdicted area. Heave to at once and prepare to be boarded."

"I can't understand your vile North Propendium accent," Beliakoff bellowed, in a broad South Propendium dialect. "If you people can't speak a man's language, don't clutter up the ether with your ridiculous chatter. I know you long-haul trampers and I'll be damned if I'll give you any air, water, food, or anything else. If you can't stock that stuff like any normal, decent—"

"This area is interdicted," the patrol boat broke in, speaking now with a broad South Propendium accent.

"Hell," Beliakoff grumbled. "They've got themselves a robot linguist."

"—under direct orders from the patrol boat *Moth*. Heave to at once, freighter, and prepare to be boarded and inspected."

BELIAKOFF glanced at the planet looming large beneath them. He gestured at the power control to Kelly and said, "Hello! Hello! Do you read me? Your

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message is not coming across. Do you read me?"

"Stop or we'll fire!"

Beliakoff nodded. Kelly kicked in all the jets and they plummeted toward the surface. With his pilot's sixth sense, Kelly changed course abruptly. A blast seared past them, sealing a starboard tube for good. Then they were in the atmosphere, traveling too fast, the hull glowing red with friction. The heavy cruiser, built only for spatial maneuvering, broke off its pursuit curve.

"All right, freighter. This means your license. You gotta leave sometime."

Beliakoff shut off the radio. Kelly fired the braking jets and began to spiral in for a landing.

As they circled, Beliakoff saw the shattered rubble and ruin where cities had been. He saw highways filled with military columns, and, at the distant edge of the horizon, a fleet of military planes winging their way to a fresh target.

"What a mess!" he said. Kelly nodded glumly.

They touched down and opened the hatches. Already a crowd of Malans had gathered. A few artists had set up their easels and were busy painting the freighter, not because it was lovely, but because it was Terran, which was better.

A Malan stepped forward, grinning. "Well," he asked, "what do you think of it?"

"Of what?"

"Our war, of course. You must have noticed!"

"Oh, yes, we noticed," Beliakoff said.

"A real intercontinental war complete with ideological differences," the man stated proudly. "Just like the civilized planets have. You must admit it's Earthlike."

"Exceedingly Earthlike," Kelly said. "Now take us to whoever's in charge — quick!"

THE conference with Nob at the Imperial Palace began well. The Prime Minister was overjoyed that real Earthmen had come to witness their war. He knew very well that, by Earth standards, it was a pretty small war. A beginner's war, really. But they were trying. Some day, with more know-how, with better equipment, they would be able to produce a war that would match anyone's.

"We were hampered from the start," Nob apologized, "by not knowing how to produce atomic fission."

"That must have been confining," Kelly said, and Beliakoff winced.

"It was. Dynamite and nitroglycerin just don't have the same grandeur and finality. The scale

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of demolition seems insignificant. But if you will come with me, gentlemen, I have something here which may interest you."

Nob ushered the Earthmen ahead of him so he could copy their loose-jointed, rolling walk.

"Here!" he said, darting ahead and opening a door. "Behold!"

The Earthmen saw, upon an ivory pedestal, a small model of an atomic bomb.

"We worked until we mastered it at last," Nob said proudly. "With any luck, we'll be in production within the month and using them within the year. Now I think I can safely say that Mala has come of age!"

Beliakoff said, "No."

"No, what?"

"No atom bombs."

"But it's Earthlike to use atomic bombs. Why—"

"This war has to end at once," Kelly said.

"You're joking!" protested Nob, looking intently at the Earthmen. But he saw at once that they were deadly serious. He groaned and sat down.

Nob was faced with a moral dilemma of fearful proportions. On the one hand, war was a typical Terran institution, an extremely important one, an institution clearly worthy of emulation by the people of Mala. But on the other hand, this Terran institution was being refuted, denied, in fact, by two typical Terrans.

The problem was insoluble for him. And Nob remembered that, when an ultimate crisis is at hand, that is the moment for the supreme authority to step in.

"We must discuss this with the Empress," he said.

HE LED them to Jusa's chambers, knocked and opened the door. Half a dozen vases shattered around them.

"On your knees, pigs!" Jusa shrilled. "You, Nob, have you brought the diamonds?"

"I knew I forgot something,"

"Forgot them! Then how dare you show your face?" Jusa stamped her small foot. "And these peasants—who are they? I've a good mind to lock them up, especially that grinning red-headed ape."

Kelly's grin became a trifle strained.

"These are *Earthmen*, Your Majesty," Nob said. "Genuine Earthmen!"

"Really?" breathed Jusa.

"Really," said Nob.

"Oh, golly," Jusa said, losing all her painfully acquired imperial pose and becoming a frightened, albeit lovely, young girl.

"Your Majesty—" Beliakoff began.

"Just call me Jusa. My gosh! Real Earthmen! I never met a

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real Earthman before. I wish you had let me know in advance. My hair—"

"Is beautiful, just like yourself," Kelly said.

"I'm so glad. I think *your* hair is beautiful, too."

Kelly turned brick-red. "You're not supposed to say that, you know."

"I *didn't* know," Jusa said. "But I'm willing to learn. What should I have—"

"Excuse me," Beliakoff broke in sourly. "Your Majesty, we've come to ask you to stop the war."

"You don't mean it!" Jusa turned bewilderedly to Kelly.

"Have to do it, honey," Kelly said softly. "You folks just aren't ready for a war yet."

Jusa's eyes flashed and she began to regain a little of her imperial pose. "But of course we are! Look at what we've done. Go over our battlefields, look at our cities, interrogate our refugees. You'll find that everything has been done in strict accordance with the rules. We're as ready for war as anyone!"

"I'm sorry, you'll have to stop it," Beliakoff said, and Kelly nodded his agreement.

Jusa gave Nob a beseeching look, but the Prime Minister averted his eyes. The dilemma was there again, enormous, insurmountable, and squarely on Jusa's shoulders. To stop the war now would be Unearthlike; to refuse the Earthmen was unthinkable.

"I just don't know," Jusa said. She looked at Kelly, who wore the guilty expression of a man caught murdering a fawn. Then she burst into tears and collapsed on a couch.

NOB and the Earthmen looked at each other, made several helpless gestures, and left.

"What now?" Beliakoff asked, in the corridor. "Do you think she'll stop the war?"

Nob shrugged his shoulders. "Who knows? It's a problem without a solution."

"But she has to make up her mind," Kelly said. "That's one of the duties of authority."

"The Empress is aware of that. And she *will* make up her mind, though it could take a year or more. Unless she fails completely under the strain."

"Poor kid," Kelly said. "She needs a man to help her out."

"Indeed she does," Nob agreed hastily. "A strong man, a wise man, a man who could guide her and be as adviser and husband to her."

Kelly blinked, then laughed nervously. "Don't look at me! I mean she's a cute kid, nice girl, make some man a wonderful wife, but I'm not the marrying kind, you know what I mean?"

"Johnny," said Beliakoff, "I'd

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like to have a serious talk with you."

Nob led them to a vacant room and left discreetly.

"I won't do it!" Kelly declared bluntly.

"You have to," Beliakoff said. "You got us into this mess. Now you can marry us out."

"No!"

"She'd make a wonderful wife," Beliakoff quoted Kelly's words back at him. "Docile, pretty, but spirited. What more could you ask?"

"Freedom of choice," Kelly said grimly.

"That's for adolescents."

"Speaking."

"She'll never be able to make up her mind to stop the war unless you marry her. Until the war ends, that interdictory ship is going to sit in orbit, waiting for us. You haven't anything to lose," Beliakoff added.

"I haven't?"

"Not a thing. It's a big galaxy and our freighter is always waiting."

"That's true . . ." Kelly admitted.

Ten minutes later, Beliakoff dragged him into the corridor. They were joined by Nob, who ushered them back to the Empress's chambers.

"It's okay by me if it's okay by you, kid," Kelly blurted out, in a tone that made Beliakoff shudder and made Nob smile in outright hero-worship.

"What is all right?" Jusa asked.

"Marriage," Kelly said. "What d'ya say?"

Jusa studied his face for several seconds. "But do you love me?"

"Give it time, kid! Give it time!"

Jusa must have seen something in his expression, something behind the embarrassment and anger. Very softly she said, "I will be most happy to marry you."

IT WAS a double-ring ceremony and authentically Terran. Beliakoff produced a Bible from the freighter and the ancient words of the Earth ceremony were read. When it was over, Kelly, grinning, perspiring, nervously rubbing his hands together, turned to his bride.

"Now stop the war, honey."

"Yes, dear," Jusa said dutifully. She heaved a great sigh.

"What's wrong?" Kelly asked.

"I just tremble to think of our cities being bombed out of existence and us not able to do anything about it because we've stopped fighting."

"What are you talking about? If we stop fighting—"

"*They* won't!" she said. "Why should they? It's Earthlike to continue conquering, and if we quit fighting, there'll be nothing to

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stop them from conquering us completely."

"Nob!" Kelly shouted. "Igor! What can we do about this?"

Nob said, "There would appear to be only one certain solution. I can arrange a meeting for you—" he turned to Beliakoff—"with Lanvi, the President of the Allies."

"What would I say to him?" asked Beliakoff.

"To her," Nob corrected. "You can say, I suppose, the same sort of thing your friend said."

Beliakoff, ashy pale, started to back away. Kelly caught him in one meaty fist. "Okay, Mr. Fixer. Your duty is plain. Marry us out of trouble."

"But I've got a girl friend in Minsk—"

"She forgot you years ago. Stop squirming, buddy."

"What does she look like?" Beliakoff queried in apprehension.

"*Very* pretty," Nob said.

DURING the double-ring ceremony, Beliakoff peered at his bride with cautious approval. Lanvi was indeed a pretty girl and she seemed to possess the Malan virtues of obedience, patience and fire.

As soon as the final words were spoken, the war was declared officially over. Peace, an authentic Earth custom, was proclaimed.

"Now the real work begins," Beliakoff said. "First, we'll need a list of the casualties."

"The what?" Nob asked.

"Casualties."

"I'm not sure I understand," said the Prime Minister.

"Casualties! The number of people killed in the warfare."

"Now wait a moment," Nob said, his voice trembling. "Do I understand you correctly? Are you trying to tell me that civilized people kill people in their wars? *Do you mean that they leave people in the cities they bomb?*"

Kelly looked at Beliakoff. Beliakoff looked at Kelly.

"Lord, Lord," murmured Kelly.

Beliakoff merely gulped.

"Is it possible?" asked Nob. "Do civilized people really—"

"Of course not," said Beliakoff.

"Never," Kelly said.

Nob pursed his lips. "I've been wanting to ask a real authority, a genuine Earthman, some questions on the subject. Our texts were by no means complete and some parts we couldn't understand at all. Like the matter of determining victories. That's something we couldn't figure out. We decided you must use a complicated system of umpires. It was too much for us, so we built a bunker in no man's land and put a man from each side in it. They tossed coins to determine whose turn it was. The winning side

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would bomb an enemy city. After the occupants had been evacuated, of course."

"Of course," said Beliakoff.

"It worked out rather well with the coins," Nob said. "Law of averages, in fact."

"Substantially our system," said Kelly.

"Just the way we do it," Beliakoff added.

"A few more questions, if you please," Nob said. "Jusa, would you bring in the big *War Encyclopedia?*"

JUSA and Lanvi had been gossiping on the other side of the room. They hurried out and returned with the great book.

"Now here," Nob said, opening the volume, "it seems to imply—"

"Wait," Beliakoff broke in. He took the book from Nob's hands and flipped through it rapidly, then turned to Kelly. In a whisper, he said in Propendium, "It looks as though Kyne blotted out all references to killing."

"Sure!" exclaimed Kelly, brightening. "I told you he was a hemophiliac—a bleeder. Naturally, he'd cut out every single mention of bloodshed!"

"This point—" Nob began.

"Later," Beliakoff said. "Right now, we'd like to get a few articles from our spaceship." He winked at Kelly, who winked back. "It won't take a moment and then we'll be only too happy to—"

"Oh, dear," said Nob. "You mean you *wanted* the spaceship?"

"What?"

"Well, I assumed that you'd have no further use for it. Metal is hard to get nowadays and it seemed only proper to erect heroic statues to both of you, the men who brought the institution of peace to Mala. Did I do something wrong?"

"Not at all, not at all," Kelly said. "Oh, not at all. Perfectly delighted. Not at—"

"Johnny!" said Beliakoff.

"Sorry," Kelly apologized, a broken man.

The brides stepped forward to claim their husbands.

Peace and prosperity came to Mala, under the deft guidance of their Terran leaders. In time, spaceships arrived and departed, but neither man showed any particular desire to board one, for their wives—docile, patient, yet fiery—proved more appealing than the lonely far reaches of space.

Beliakoff sometimes pondered the opportune melting down of ther freighter. He was never able to discover who had signed the order. But all Mala knew the saying, "An Earthman is easy to catch, but hard to hold." He wondered whether that had been the true reason behind the order to scrap the ship.

By this time, of course, he

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didn't really care; if his wife or Kelly's had been responsible, it was all the more reason to feel appreciated.

NOB knew the answer, but he had other things on his mind. He lay awake, restless, until his wife asked worriedly what was wrong.

"I've been wondering," he said. "Those war books that the Earthmen had us turn in — I never did understand why all those deletions were made. You know, the ones that made us figure out a way of deciding which side won."

"But the Earthmen said they used the very same system," she reminded him. "And they wouldn't lie, would they?"

"They would, if it was for our good. That's what is known as diplomacy, dear. Statesmanship. Or politics. Interchangeable terms."

She looked impressed. "Oh. And?"

"I've tried to question the crews of ships that land here. The answers are so evasive that I can't help thinking —"

"Yes, dear?" she prompted.

"— that civilized people actually *kill* each other in wars."

She turned a shocked face toward him. "How can you think such a thing? What would be the advantage?"

"Advantage?" he repeated. Then his expression cleared and he fell back on his pillow, completely relaxed. "I hadn't thought of that, dear. None, of course. It would really be too much, wouldn't it?"

"No question of it, dear," she said. "Now that that's settled, can you go to sleep?"

There was no answer. He was already snoring peacefully.

— KRIS NEVILLE

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All Jackson's Children

By DANIEL F. GALOUYE

Their chances hung literally on a prayer . . . which they had to answer all by themselves!

ANGUS McINTOSH vigorously scuffed the tarnished nameplate on the wrecked cargo carrier. Then he stepped back and squinted under shaggy gray eyebrows.

Letter by letter, number by number, he coaxed out the designation on the crumpled bow of the spacer in the vine-matted gorge: "RT . . . 3070 . . . VG-II."

His lean frame tensed with concern as he turned to stare soberly at the other. "A Vegan robot trader!"

Bruce Drummond grinned. "Are we lucky! Clunkers are worth money—in any condition."

Angus snorted impatiently. "Let's get out of here, quick."

"Get out?" the stocky Drummond repeated incredulously as he ran thick-set fingers over the black stubble on his cheek. "Ain't we going to salvage the clunkers? The book says they're ours after fifty years."

"The hold's empty. There's no cargo."

"There was when it landed.

Illustrated by FINLAY

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Look at the angle of incidence on those fins."

"Exactly." Frowning, Angus shifted his holster around on his hip and strode back toward the plain. "Ever hear of a frustrated compulsion?"

DRUMMOND, following hesitantly, shook his head.

"Those clunkers have to satisfy a basic behavior circuit," McIntosh explained as he hastened his step. "We don't know what the compulsion of this bunch is. Suppose — well, suppose they have a chiropractic function. How'd you like to be the first person to show up after they've been frustrated for a hundred years?"

"Oh," Drummond said comprehendingly, stumbling to keep pace.

Angus McIntosh brushed a mass of tendrils aside and stepped out on the plain. "We'll report it and let them send in a deactivation crew. That way, at least, we'll get fifty per cent of salvage and no danger."

"Even that ain't bad — just for following an SOS a hundred light-years. Taking an uncharted route and picking up that signal sure paid off like —"

Drummond gagged on his words as he gripped Angus's arm and pointed.

Their ship was a shining oval, bobbing and weaving on a sea of silver that surged across the plain toward a cliff on the left.

"Clunkers!" Drummond gasped. "Hundreds of 'em — making off with our boat!"

He unholstered his weapon and fired.

Angus struck his wrist sharply. "Why don't you just run out waving your arms? We don't have enough firepower to get more than eight or ten of them."

But the warning was too late. Already the tide had washed away from the ship and was surging toward the gorge.

There was a noise behind them and Angus spun around. Ten feet away stood a robot with the designation RA-204 on his breastplate.

"Welcome, O Jackson," the clunker said reverently.

Then he hinged forward on his hip joints until his head almost touched the ground. The gesture was a clockwork salaam.

McINTOSH'S thin legs dangled in front of 204's breastplate and his ankles were secure in the grip of metal fingers as he rode the robot's shoulders.

RA-76 strode alongside, carrying a squirming and swearing Drummond. Around them, the shining horde marched along noisily.

"He has come!" cried one.

"Jackson has come!" chanted

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the others of the shining horde.

"He will show us the way!" shouted RA-204.

Drummond kicked, but 76 only held his legs more firmly. Furious, Drummond reached for his gun.

"That's using your head," Angus said sarcastically. "Agitate them. Then we'll never get out of here."

Drummond let the weapon slip back into its holster. "What did we get into—a nest of fanatics? Who's Jackson?"

Angus helplessly shrugged his bony shoulders.

The procession filtered through a narrow woods and broke out on another plain, headed for the nearby cliff.

Angus leaned forward. "Put me down, 204."

"Thou art Jackson," said the robot solemnly. "And Thou art testing me to see whether I would so easily abandon my Supervisor."

"Not testing," Angus said. "Just asking. Come on, how about it?"

"Praise Jackson!" 204 cried.

"Jackson! Jackson!" intoned the throng.

Drummond leaned an elbow on 76's skull plate and disgustedly cupped his chin in his hand. "What if they *are* chiropractor robots?"

"We'll probably need one after this ride," Angus said uncomfortably.

"Not like we'll need a way to get back to the ship and cut off those converters before they overcharge."

"Slow charge?" Angus asked between grunts timed with 204's stride.

"Hell, no. I didn't think we'd be here more than a couple of hours. By tomorrow at this time, there'll be a crater out there big enough to bury the Capellan fleet."

"Great," said Angus. "That gives us another thing to worry about."

The robots fell into two groups as they neared a cave in the cliff.

"Jackson is my Supervisor!" chanted the ones on the right.

"I shall not rust!" answered those on the left.

"He maketh me to adjust my joint tension!" cried the first group.

"Oh, brother," said Drummond.

"Sounds like a psalm," suggested Angus.

"You ought to know. You always got your nose in that Bible."

"Notice anything peculiar about them?"

"Very funny," sneered Drummond at the question.

"No, I'm serious."

"They bounce the daylights out of you when they walk," Drummond grumbled.

"No. Their finish. It's shiny—like they were fresh out of the factory—not like they've been marooned here for a hundred years."

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DRUMMOND scratched his chin. "Maybe their compulsion is metal polishing."

"Not with the kind of fingers they have."

Angus indicated the hand that held his ankle. Three digits were wrenches of various sizes. The index finger was a screwdriver. The thumb was a Stillson wrench. The thumb on the other hand was a disclike appendage.

Drummond hunched over. "76, what's your function?"

The robot looked up. "To serve Jackson."

"You're a big help," said Drummond.

"Why dost thou tempt us, O Jackson?" asked RA-204. "Wouldst Thou test our beliefs?"

"We're no gods," Angus declared as the robot drew up before the cave.

"Thou art Jackson!" insisted 204.

Drummond and McIntosh were hoisted to a ledge beside the mouth of the cave. The robots backed off, forming a half circle, and bowed in obeisance.

Angus ran a hand helplessly through his sparse gray hair. "Would you say there are four hundred of them?"

"At least." Drummond surveyed the expanse of metal bodies. "You know, maybe they don't have a function."

"Impossible. Hasn't been a clunker in five hundred years without a primary compulsion."

"Think they forgot theirs?"

"Can't. They may forget how to put it in words, but the compulsion is good for as long as their primary banks are intact. That's not what's worrying me, though."

"No?"

"*Religious* robots! There can't be any such brand. Yet here they are."

Drummond studied them silently.

"Before there can be theological beliefs," McIntosh went on, "there has to be some sort of foundation — the mystery of origin, the fear of death, the concept of the hereafter. Clunkers *know* they come from a factory. They *know* that when they're finally disassembled, they'll be lifeless scrap metal."

Drummond spat disdainfully. "One thing's for sure — this pack thinks we're God Almighty."

"Jackson Almighty," Angus corrected somberly.

"Well, God or Jackson, we'd better get back to the ship or this is going to be a long visitation."

Drummond faced the almost prostrate robots and made a megaphone of his hands. "All right, you guys! How's about knocking it off?"

Slowly, the robots reared erect, waiting.

"Take us back to our ship!"

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RA-204 stepped forward. "Again Thou art testing us, O Jackson."

ANGUS spread his arms imploringly. "Look, fellows. We're men. We're —"

"Thou art our Supervisor!" the throng roared.

"One of you is Jackson," explained 204. "The other is a Divine Test. We must learn which is the True Supervisor."

"You're *not* being tested!" McIntosh insisted.

"Our beliefs are firm, O Jackson!" cried a hundred metallic voices.

"Thou are the Supervisor!" declared 204 resolutely.

"For God's sake," urged Drummond, "tell 'em you're their Jackson and then lay down the law."

"No. Can't do it that way."

"Why not? Unfair advantage, I suppose?" There was a cutting edge on the younger man's words.

Angus stared thoughtfully at the robots. "If we only knew how they forgot their origin, how they got religion, we might find a way to get through to them."

Drummond laughed contemptuously. "*You* figure it out. *I'm* going to play Jackson and get back to the ship." He turned toward the robots.

But McIntosh caught his arm. "Let me try something else first." He faced the horde below. "Who made you?"

"Thou hast, O Supervisor!" the robots chanted like a gleeful Sunday school class.

"And Thou hast put us on this world and robot begot robot until we were as we are today," added 204 solemnly.

Drummond slapped the heel of his hand against his forehead. "Now they think they've got a sex function!"

Angus's shoulders fell dismally. "Maybe if we try to figure out their designation. They're all RAs — whatever the A stands for."

There was a hollow rumbling in the cave that grew in volume until the cliff shook. Then a second group of robots emerged and fanned out to encircle the ledge.

"Hell," said Drummond in consternation. "There's twice as many as we figured!"

"Thought there'd be more," Angus admitted. "That ship was big enough to hold a thousand clunkers. And they didn't waste space in those days."

The newcomers fell prostrate alongside the others.

THE planet's single satellite hung like a lost gem over the low mountains east of the plain. It washed the cliff with a cloak of effulgence and bathed the forbidden ship in an aura of gleaming silver.

Below the ledge, the reverent robots wavered occasionally and

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highlights of coruscation played capriciously across their plates. Their whispered invocations were a steady drone, like the soft touch of the wind.

"Quit it!" Drummond yelled angrily. "Break it up! Go home!"

Angus sat with his head against the cliff, face tilted up. "That didn't help any."

"When are they going to give up?"

McIntosh glanced abstractedly at the horde. "How long would *we* keep it up if *our* God appeared among us?"

Drummond swore. "Damned if you haven't been reading the print off that Bible!"

"What do you suppose happened," Angus went on heedlessly, "to make them more than clunkers – to make them grope for the basic truths?"

Drummond spat disgustedly in answer.

"Civilization goes on for a hundred years," Angus said as he leaned back and closed his eyes, "spreading across a hunk of the Galaxy, carrying along its knowledge and religious convictions. And all the while, there's this little lost island of mimic beliefs – so much like our own creed, except that their god is called Jackson."

Drummond rose and paced. "Well, you'll have plenty of time to set them straight, if we're still sitting on this shelf eleven hours from now."

"Maybe that's what it'll take – bringing them step by step through theology."

"Overnight?"

No, not overnight, Angus realized. It would take months to pound in new convictions.

Drummond slipped down from the ledge. "Here goes nothing."

Interestedly, Angus folded his arms and watched the other square his shoulders and march off confidently through the ranks of robots toward the ship in the distance.

For a moment, it seemed he would succeed. But two of the RAs suddenly reared erect and seized him by the arms. They bore him on their shoulders and deposited him back on the ridge beside McIntosh.

"Warm tonight," Drummond observed bitterly, glancing up at the sky.

"Sure is," Angus agreed, his voice calm. "Wouldn't be surprised if we got some rain tomorrow."

DRUMMOND flipped another pebble and it *pinged* down on a metal back. "Seven out of thirteen."

"Getting good."

"Look, let's tell 'em we're their Supervisor and end this marathon worship."

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"Which one of us is going to play the divine role?"

"What difference does it make?"

Angus shrugged and his tired eyes stared off into the darkness. "One of us is—Jackson. The other is an impostor, brought here to test their faith. When they find out which is which, what are they going to do to the impostor?"

Drummond looked startled. "I see what you mean."

The miniature moon had wheeled its way to the zenith and now the first gray tinge of dawn silhouetted the peaks of the mountain range.

Angus rose and stretched. "We've got to find out what their function is."

"Why?"

"It looks like religion is their only interest. But maybe that's because they're completely frustrated in their basic compulsion. If we could discover their function, maybe we could focus their attention back on it."

"RA," Drummond mumbled puzzledly. "Robot agriculturist?"

ANGUS shook his head. "They wouldn't be frustrated—not with a whole planet to farm. Besides, they'd be equipped with agricultural implements instead of wrenches."

Drummond got up suddenly. "You figure it out. I have something else to try."

Angus followed him along the ledge until they reached the mouth of the cave.

"What are you going to do?"

Drummond hitched his trousers. "The way we're ringed in here, it's a cinch we won't get past 'em in the six hours we have left."

"So you're going to make off through the cave?"

The younger man nodded. "They might take off after me. That'll give you a chance to get to the ship and cut off those converters before they make like a nova."

Angus chuckled. "Suppose half of them decide to stay here with me?"

Drummond swore impatiently at his skepticism. "At any rate, one of us might get back to the converters."

"And leave the other here?"

"He can say he's Jackson and order an attack in force on the ship."

"I don't follow you."

"Skidding the ship in a circle with the exhaust blowers on," Drummond explained patiently, "will take care of *ten thousand* clunkers."

He dropped from the ledge and raced into the cave. None of the robots stirred. Either they hadn't noticed Drummond's departure, Angus reasoned, or they weren't concerned because they knew the cave led nowhere.

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THE sun came up, daubing the cliff with splotches of orange and purple and striking up scintillations in the beads of dew on the robots' backs.

And still the tiresomely shouted veneration continued.

Angus paced the ledge, stopping occasionally to stare into the impenetrable shadows of the cave. He checked his watch. Five hours to go—five hours, and then time would be meaningless for the rest of his life, with the ship destroyed.

It was unlikely that rescue would come. The wrecked spacer's automatic distress signals had gone out in an ever-expanding sphere for a hundred years, and he and Drummond had been the only humans to hear them.

Trade routes were pretty stable in this section of the Galaxy now. And it was hardly possible that, within the next ten or twenty years, one would be opened up that would intercept the SOS that had lured them here.

He stood up and surveyed the robots. "RA-204."

204 reared erect. "Yes, Jackson?"

"One of us is gone."

"We know, O Supervisor."

"Why did you let him get away?"

"If he is not the True Jackson, it doesn't matter that he fled. If he is the Supervisor, he will return. Otherwise, why did he come here to us in the first place?"

Another robot straightened. "We are ashamed, O Jackson, that we have failed the Divine Test and have not recognized our True Supervisor."

Angus held up his arms for silence. "Once there was a cargo of robots. That was a hundred years ago. The ship was from Vega II. It developed trouble and crashed when it tried to land on this planet. There was—"

"What's a year, O Supervisor?" asked 204.

"A Vega-two, Jackson?" said 76 bewilderedly.

"What's a planet?" another wanted to know.

McIntosh leaned back hopelessly against the cliff. All of their memories and a good deal of their vocabularies had been lost. He could determine how much only through days of conversation. It would take weeks to learn their function, to rekindle a sense of duty sufficiently strong to draw their interest away from religion. Unless—

He drew resolutely erect. "Strip the converters! Pull the aft tube lining!"

The robots looked uncomprehendingly at him. It was obvious they weren't trained for spacecraft maintenance.

But it had to have something to do with mechanics. "A battle fleet is orbiting at one diameter!

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Arm all warheads on the double!"

They stared helplessly at one another, then back at Angus. Not ordnancemen.

"Pedestrian Strip Number Two is jammed! Crane crew, muster on the right!"

The robots shifted uncertainly. Apparently they weren't civic maintenancemen, either.

Defeated, Angus scanned their blank face plates. For a moment, it was almost as though he could discern expressions of confusion. Then he laughed at the thought that metal could accommodate a frown.

Suddenly the robots shifted their gaze to the cave. Drummond, shoulders sagging dismally, walked out and squinted against the glare. Several of the robots started toward him.

"Okay, okay!" he growled, heading back for the ledge before they could reach him.

"NO LUCK?" Angus asked.

Disgusted, Drummond clambered up beside him. "The cave's just a nice-sized room."

"Took you two hours to find that out?"

The younger man shook his head. "I was hiding by the entrance, waiting for the clunkers to break it up and give me a chance to run for the ship . . . How many robots did we decide there were?"

"About eight hundred."

"Wrong. You can add another four hundred or so."

"In the cave?"

Drummond nodded. "With their parts spread all the way from here to hell and back."

"Dismantled?"

"Down to the last nut and bolt. They've even got their secondary memory banks stripped."

Angus was thoughtfully silent a long while. "RA . . ." he said finally. "Robot Assembler!"

"That's what I figured." Drummond turned back toward the robots and funneled his voice through his hands.

"Okay, you clunkers! I want all odd-numbered RAs stripped down for reconditioning!' He glanced at Angus. "When they get through, I'll have half of what's left strip the other half, and so forth."

McIntosh grinned caustically. "Brilliant! The whole operation shouldn't take more than two or three days." Then his face took on a grim cast. "Drummond, we've only got four hours left to get to those converters."

"But you don't understand. Once they get started, they'll be so busy, we'll probably be able to walk away."

Angus smiled indulgently. "Once they get started."

He nodded toward the robots.

They had all returned to their attitude of veneration.

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"It won't work," McIntosh explained. "Their obsession with religion is stronger than their primary compulsion. That's probably because they've been satisfying their compulsion all along." He jerked a thumb in the direction of the cave.

Drummond swore venomously.

Angus dropped down on the ledge and folded his knees in his arms. He felt his age bearing down on him for the first time.

"Twelve hundred robots," he said meditatively. "Twelve hundred *RA* robots. Out of touch with civilization for a century. Satisfying their primary function by disassembling and assembling one another. Going at it in shifts. Splitting themselves into three groups."

"That device on their left thumb," Drummond interrupted. "It's a burnisher. That's why they're so shiny."

Angus nodded. "Three groups. Group A spends so many months stripping and reassembling Group B. Meanwhile, Group C, which has just been put together again, has no memory because their secondary banks have been wiped clean. So, like children, they *learn* from the working Group A."

DRUMMOND'S mouth hung open in shocked understanding. "And by the time A finishes the job, C's education is complete! And it's A's turn to be stripped!"

"By then," Angus went on, "Group C is not only ready to start stripping Group A, but has also become intellectually mature enough to begin the education of the reassembled Group B!"

They sat still for a while, thinking it over.

"The compulsion to do their jobs," McIntosh continued, "is unchanged because the primary function banks are sealed circuits and can't be tampered with. But in each generation, they have their secondary memory circuits wiped clean and have to start all over, getting whatever general knowledge they can from the last generation."

Drummond snapped his fingers excitedly. "That's why they don't know what we are! Their idea of Man had to be passed down by word of mouth. And it got all distorted in the process!"

Angus's stare, more solicitous now, swept slowly over the prostrate robots. "More important, that's why they developed a religion. What's the main difference between human and robotic intelligence? It's that our span of life is limited on one end by birth, the other by death — mysteries of origin and destiny that can't be explained. You see, the *ordinary* clunker understands where *he* came from and where he's going.

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But here are robots who have to struggle with those mysteries — birth and death of the conscious intellect which they themselves once knew, and forgot, and now have turned into myths."

"So they start thinking in terms of religion," Drummond said. "Well, that clears up the whole thing, doesn't it?"

"Not quite. It doesn't explain why the religion they've invented parallels ours so closely. And it doesn't tell us who Jackson is."

Drummond ran thick fingernails against the stubble on his cheeks. "Jackson is my Supervisor. I shall not rust. He maketh me to adjust my joint tension —" He stopped and frowned. "I've heard that before somewhere, only it sounded different."

Angus gave him a wry, tired smile. "Sure. It's practically the Psalm of David. Now you see why the resemblance is driving me batty."

THE robots stirred. Several of them stood up and plodded into the cave. The others continued repeating their endless praise and devotion — prayers in every sense of the word except common sense.

Angus leaned back against the cliff and let the sun's heat warm him.

"Somehow it doesn't seem fair," he commented unhappily.

"What doesn't?" Drummond asked.

"They're so close to the Truth. Yet, after we file a report, a deactivation crew will come along and erase their beliefs. They'll have their memory banks swept clean and once more they'll be nothing but clunkers with a factory-specification job of routine work to do."

"Ain't that what they're supposed to be?"

"But these are different. They've found something no clunker's ever had before — hope, faith, aspiration beyond death." He shook his head ruefully.

There was movement at the mouth of the cave and the smaller group of robots emerged from the shadows, two of them bearing a stone slab. Their steps were ceremoniously slow as they approached the ledge. Bowing, they placed the tablet at Angus's feet and backed away.

"These are the articles of our faith, O Jackson," one announced. "We have preserved them for Thy coming."

McIntosh stared down at the charred remains of a book. Its metal-fiber binding was shredded and fused and encrusted with the dust of ages.

Drummond knelt beside it and, with stiff fingers, brushed away the film of grime, uncovering part of the title:

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O L Y
B I B E

Eagerly, Angus eased the cover back. Of the hundreds of pages it had originally contained, only flaked parts of two or three remained. The printing was scarcely legible on the moldy paper.

He read aloud those words he could discern:

". . . to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside cool waters; He . . ."

Drummond jabbed Angus with a triumphant forefinger. "They didn't invent any religion, after all!"

"It isn't important *how* they got it. The fact that they accepted it – that's what's important." McIntosh glanced up at Drummond. "They probably found this in the wreck of the ship they'd been in. It's easy to see they haven't used it in hundreds of generations. Instead, the gist of what's in it was passed down orally. And their basic concepts of Man and supervisor were distorted all along the way – confused with the idea of God."

GENTLY, he let the cover fall. And a shining square of duraloid fell out.

"It's somebody's picture!" Drummond exclaimed.

"An ID card," Angus said, holding it so the light wouldn't reflect off its transparent protective cover.

It was a picture of a nondescript man – not as stout as Drummond, nor as lean as McIntosh – with hair neither all black, like the younger man's, nor nearly all white, like Angus's.

The print below the picture was indiscernible, except for the subject's last name . . .

"Jackson!" Drummond whispered.

Angus slowly replaced the card. "A hundred years of false devotion," he said pensively. "Just think –"

"This is no time for that kind of gas." Drummond glanced at his watch. "We got just two hours to cut off those converters." Desperately, he faced the robots. "Hey, you clunkers! You're robot assemblers. You got four hundred clunkers in that cave, all in pieces. Get in there and put 'em together!"

Angus shook his head disapprovingly. Somehow it didn't seem right, calling them clunkers.

"Jackson is my Supervisor!" intoned RA-204.

"Jackson is my Supervisor!" echoed the mass.

Drummond glanced frantically at his watch, then looked helplessly at Angus. Angus shrugged.

The younger man's face suddenly tensed with resolution. "So they've got to have a Jackson? All right, I'll give 'em one!"

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He waved his fist at the horde. "I'm your Supervisor! I'm your Jackson! Now clear out of the way and—"

RA-76's hand darted out and seized Drummond's ankle, tugged him off the ledge. As he fell to the ground, a score of robots closed in over him, metal arms flailing down methodically. Angus yelled at them to stop, saw he was too late and sank down, turning away sickly.

Finally, after a long while, they backed off and faced Angus.

"We have passed the Divine test, O Jackson!" 204 shouted up jubilantly.

"We have redeemed ourselves before our Supervisor!" exclaimed 76.

It took a long, horror-filled moment before Angus could speak.

"How do you know?" he managed to ask at last.

"If he had been Jackson," exclaimed 204, "we could not have destroyed him."

THE robots fell prostrate again and returned to their devotional. But now the phrases were triumphant, where before they had been servile and uncertain.

Angus stared numbly down at Drummond, then backed against the cliff. The litany below, exuberant now, grew mightily in volume, booming vibrantly against distant hills.

"There is but one Supervisor!" intoned 204.

"But one Jackson!" answered the assembly.

"And now He dwelleth among His children!" 76 chanted.

"In their midst!" boomed the hundreds.

Suddenly it all seemed horribly ludicrous and Angus laughed. The litany stopped and his laughter grew shriller, louder, edged with hysteria.

The shimmering sea of metal, confounded, stared at him and it was as though he could see fleshy furrows of confusion on the featureless faces . . . But how could a clunker show emotion?

His laughter slowed and died, like the passing of a violent storm. And he felt weakened with a sickening sense of compassion. Robots—*human* robots—standing awed before unknown concepts while they groped for Truth. Clunkers with a sense of right and wrong and with an overwhelming love. It was absurd that he had been elected father of twelve hundred children—whether flesh or metal—but it didn't *feel* at all absurd.

"Dost Thou despair of us, O Jackson?" asked 76 hesitantly, staring up at him.

204 motioned toward the ship, the top of its hull shining beyond the nearby woods. "Wouldst Thou *still* return to Thy vessel, Supervisor?"

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Incredulous, Angus tensed. "You mean I can go?"

"If that is Thy wish, True Jackson, you may go," said 76 submissively.

As he watched unbelievingly, a corridor opened in their ranks, extending toward the woods and the ship beyond. He glanced anxiously at his watch. There was still more than an hour left.

Wearily, he dropped from the ledge and trudged toward freedom, trying to look straight ahead. His eyes, nevertheless, wandered to the dejected figures who faced him with their heads bowed.

Then he laughed again, realizing the illogical nature of his solicitous thoughts. Imagine — *dejected* clunkers! Still, the metal faces seemed somehow different. Where, a moment earlier, he had fancied expressions of jubilation, now there was the sense of hopelessness on the steel plates.

SHRUGGING off his uncertainty, he walked faster. After all, was it *his* fault they'd stumbled upon a substitute for birth and death and had become something more than clunkers? What was he supposed to do — stay and play missionary, bring them the Truth so that when a deactivation crew came along, they would be so advanced morally that no one would suggest their destruction?

He stopped and scanned the ranks on either side. He'd do one thing for them, at least — he wouldn't report the wreck. Then it would be centuries, probably, before another ship wandered far enough away from the trade routes to intercept the distress signals.

Relieved by his decision, he went ahead more at ease.

And the litany started again — softly, appealing:

"Jackson is my Supervisor."

"I shall not rust . . ."

Angus stiffened abruptly and stared at his watch, realizing belatedly that it had stopped. But how long ago? How much time did he have left? Should he take the chance and make a dash for the converters?

He reached the end of the robot corridor and started to sprint for the ship.

But he halted and turned to glance back at the humble, patient horde. They were expectantly silent now — as though they could sense his indecision. He backed away from them.

Then the light of a hundred Arcturan days flared briefly and a mighty mountain of sound and concussion collapsed on him. The trees buckled and branches were hurled out against the cliff. It rained leaves and pieces of metal from the hull for a long while as Angus hugged the ground.

When he finally looked up, fa-

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miliar bits of the ship were strewn around him—a spacesuit helmet here, a control dial there, a transmitter tube up ahead.

He rose shakily, staring at a black book that lay near the helmet with its pages ruffled. He picked it up and straightened out the leaves. Then he motioned to the robots and they clustered around him.

He would have to start from the beginning.

He wet his lips.

"In the beginning," Angus read in a loud, convincing voice, "*God* created heaven and earth and the earth was void and empty and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And *God* said, 'Let there be light' . . ."

—DANIEL F. GALOUYE

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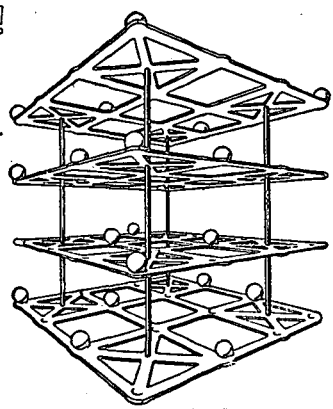

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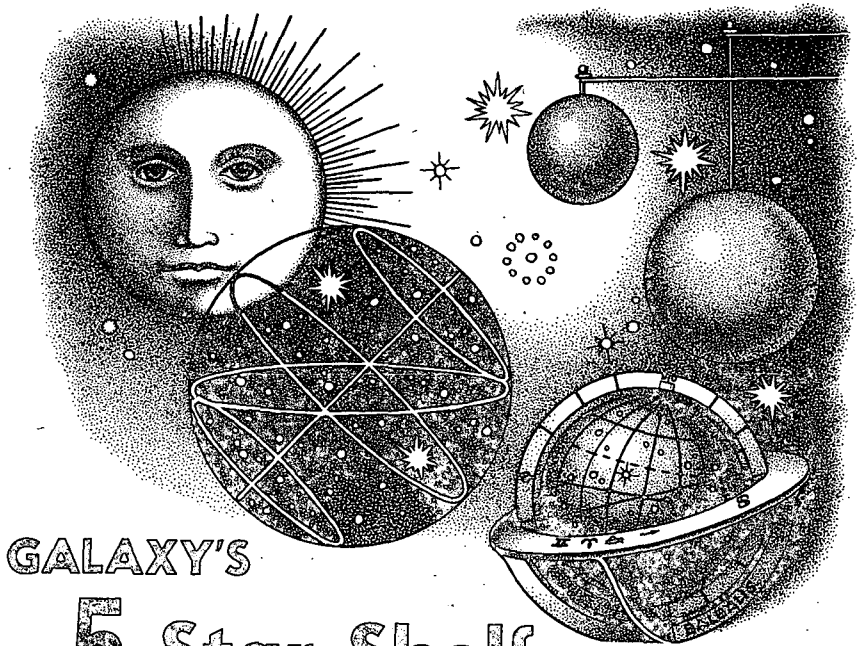

GALAXY'S 5 Star Shelf

THIS time of year brings its problems. For a change, it's not Whom shall we Do — but What shall we Give. Being limited in space, I shall have to concentrate on one market — juveniles. Everyone knows a youngster, or was one once. As our annual crimson-clad Santa might say, "Forewarned is four-armed." And so I hope I can help someone avoid the stinkers and make a happy choice.

BETWEEN PLANETS by Robert Heinlein. Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y., $2.75

LIKE all Heinlein's juveniles, plausibility of plot, motivation and science are all uppermost. His boy heroes have human fallibilities and manage to make plenty of errors of judgment, even as we adults.

Don Harvey, a teen-age student with a bothersome nationality problem, is recalled from school in New Mexico by a couple of cryptic spacegrams from his parents on Mars. Trouble is brewing with the Venus Colony. It erupts when he reaches Circum Terra, Earth's space station. A Venusian raiding party has seized

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the station under the noses of Earth's forces and Don becomes a human football. Born in deep space of Venusian and Earth parentage, his nationality becomes a vital issue.

He is finally allowed to land on Venus, mainly through the intervention of Sir Isaac Newton, a most engaging dragon-native of Venus. He has also managed to retain a cheap plastic ring given him by a leading Earth scientist before the scientist's demise at the hands of Terrestrial security police, who also gave Don a rough working-over prior to his leaving Earth.

Don's big problem is to reach Mars with the mysterious ring for his parents. With Terra's overwhelming superiority, however, it doesn't look as if he will until the end of hostilities.

These are by no means all of Don's headaches. Survival comes first.

Heinlein has written a juvenile that is also guaranteed to have the adult reader at seat edge.

MISSION TO THE MOON by Lester del Rey. John C. Winston Co., Phila. & Toronto, $2.00

SEQUEL to *Step to the Stars,* this volume carries the story of the conquest of space another pace forward from the successful space station. Young Jim Stanley, hero of the original construction by reason of leading the mutiny that got the job finished, is at loose ends.

Relegated to ferry work, he is eager to be among the first to tackle the *big* piloting job, that of handling the Moon ships. At the moment, however, public reaction has swung against further exploration by virtue of the propaganda campaign by the Combine, a union of European and Asiatic nations. It takes adroit political maneuvering, plus a foolishly heroic action, to make the Moon trip possible.

Del Rey's book has a remarkably strong feeling of reality.

SPACE POLICE, edited by Andre Norton. World Publishing Co., Cleveland & N. Y., $2.75

IN THE old days, this "idea" anthology would hardly have been classified as a juvenile. I've been maintaining in private arguments that what was good enough for us back then is also good enough for the new generation, the vast difference being that they're ready for it at a *much* earlier age!

The book is subdivided into three sections: "We Police Ourselves," "We are Policed" and "Galactic Agents." Of the nine stories, four are bell-ringers, four are bell-buzzers and one is a

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dead button—not at all a bad percentage.

FLIGHT TO THE MISTY PLANET by M. E. Patchett. Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., Indianapolis & N. Y., $2.75

RATHER than being the record of a flight to Venus, as the title seems to imply, this is the Odyssey of two youths, midshipmen on a Space Patrol training ship. Their survey rocket is wrecked within a huge cloud-concealed bowl harboring wild-life that makes Conan Doyle's *Lost World* look like the Children's Zoo.

M. E. Patchett writes a fast-moving, virile adventure yarn, which is a bit surprising—the "M" stands for Mary.

SPACEWARD BOUND by Slater Brown. Prentice-Hall, Inc., N. Y., $2.75

AN exuberant but ill-prepared attempt at a flight to the Moon opens this book. An object lesson in thoroughness is thus presented to the juvenile reader in the failure of the expedition.

The remainder of the book is devoted to the efforts of a group of American college students and graduates, financed by a mysterious Indian benefactor, to perfect the techniques of space travel. Their task is made even harder by an enemy within, an instructor with a dictator complex, determined to rule the world by means of an invincible space station.

You might call this a juvenile *Prelude to Space*—the Menace is thrown in for youthful excitement.

STARBOY by Carl L. Biemiller. Henry Holt & Co., N. Y., $2.50

SEVERAL of this month's books are sequels, but they all have the virtue of being complete and enjoyable in themselves.

The Magic Ball from Mars, meant for the 8-to-12 audience, introduced us to Johnny Jenks and his Martian friend Arcon, who made the mistake of leaving Johnny with the space-a-tron, a magic marble that obeys mental commands.

In this sequel, Arcon brings his son Remo to Earth to spend a vacation with Johnny. Mr. Jenks, a government employee, informs Washington about his guest and the bureaucrats want to make a hostage of Remo. Luckily, one of them is a very understanding chap and he and an old Mr. Applegate make the boys' vacation an enjoyable offering of little boys' delights.

ZIP-ZIP AND HIS FLYING SAUCER by John M. Schealer.

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E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., N. Y., $2.50

ZIP-ZIP is the name of a boy from Mars who has so much excess energy that he Zips in the middle of a sentence. Disconcerting conversationally, but very convenient when you want a steam shovel brought from Chicago, and he has a flying saucer handy that can do the job.

Randy Riddle, with his two brothers and sister, gain Zip's aid in helping their father, who must have a steam shovel or lose three days' work time.

Zip helps them out, but they experience a bit of difficulty. Did *you* ever see a flying saucer with a full-size steam shovel suspended beneath?

Your 8-to-12 should love it, especially the illustrations by Hans Helweg.

INSIDE THE ATOM by Isaac Asimov. Abelard-Schuman, Inc., N. Y., $2.75

IT ISN'T fiction, but Asimov manages to come up with a book that teen-agers and even pre-teens can sink their milk teeth into with gusto and profit. He gives the atomic story in a thorough — and thoroughly readable — style, from the structure of the atom down to the hazards of fission and the future of atomic power in our civilization.

THE STARS BY CLOCK AND FIST by Henry M. Neely. The Viking Press, N. Y., $4.00

NOW *here's* a book that fills a need! All these centuries, the neophyte astronomer has had to guess his way through virtually incomprehensible star-maps, crossing his eyes in an effort to recognize the products of our ancestors' imaginations.

Neely is well qualified to produce such a book. He lectures at the Hayden Planetarium in New York, conducts a beginners' astronomy course and is editor of *The Sky Reporter*, the Planetarium's monthly magazine.

He has constructed a simple recognition system consisting solely of his book, a fist and a knowledge of the face of a clock. A series of maps gives the location of the constellations at any time of year in any northern latitude and, with no more equipment than the human hand, individual stars can be recognized even by the most bewildered beginner.

I can vouch that it works both easily and well.

— FLOYD C. GALE

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Butterfly 9

By DONALD KEITH

Jeff needed a job and this man had a job to offer — one where giant economy-size trouble had labels like fakemake, bumsy and peekage!

I

AT FIRST, Jeff scarcely noticed the bold-looking man at the next table. Nor did Ann. Their minds were busy with Jeff's troubles.

"You're still the smartest color engineer in television," Ann told Jeff as they dallied with their food. "You'll bounce back. Now eat your supper."

"This beanery is too noisy and hot," he grumbled. "I can't eat. Can't talk. Can't think." He took a silver pillbox from his pocket and fumbled for a black one. Those were vitamin pills; the big red and yellow ones were sleeping capsules. He gulped the pill.

Ann looked disapproving in a wifely way. "Lately you chew pills like popcorn," she said. "Do you really need so many?"

"I need something. I'm sure losing my grip."

Ann stared at him. "Baby! How silly! Nothing happened, except you lost your lease. You'll build up a better company in a new spot. We're young yet."

JEFF sighed and glanced around the crowded little restaurant. He wished he could fly away somewhere. At that moment, he met the gaze of the moustachioed man at the next table.

Illustrated by GAUGHAN

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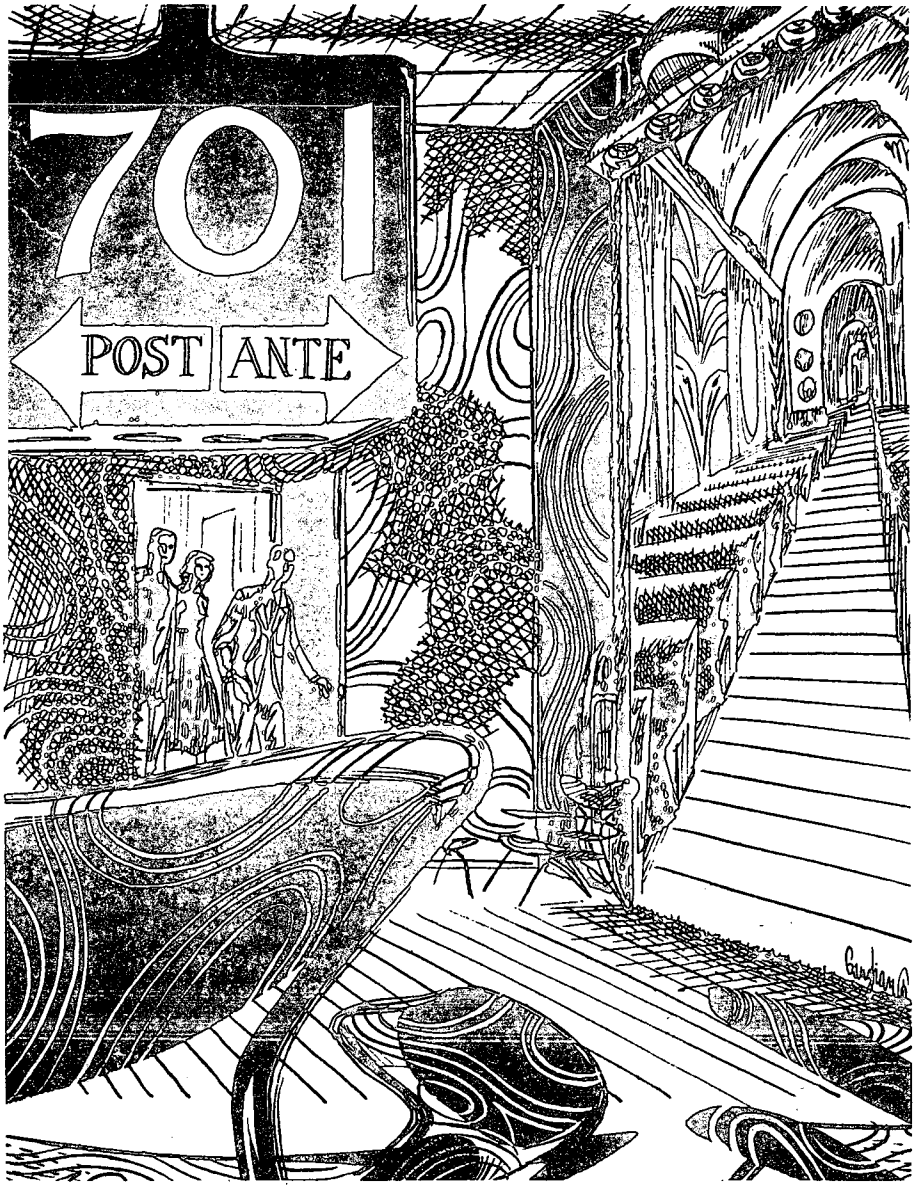

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The fellow seemed to be watching him and Ann. Something in his confident gaze made Jeff uneasy. Had they met before?

Ann whispered, "So you noticed him, too. Maybe he's following us. I think I saw him on the parking lot where we left the car."

Jeff shrugged his big shoulders. "If he's following us, he's nuts. We've got no secrets and no money."

"It must be my maddening beauty," said Ann.

"I'll kick him cross-eyed if he starts anything," Jeff said. "I'm just in the mood."

Ann giggled. "Honey, what big veins you have! Forget him. Let's talk about the engineering lab you're going to start. And let's eat."

He groaned. "I lose my appetite every time I think about the building being sold. It isn't worth the twelve grand. I wouldn't buy it for that if I could. What burns me is that, five years ago, I could have bought it for two thousand."

"If only we could go back five years." She shrugged fatalistically. "But since we can't—"

The character at the next table leaned over and spoke to them, grinning. "You like to get away? You wish to go back?"

Jeff glanced across in annoyance. The man was evidently a salesman, with extra gall.

"Not now, thanks," Jeff said. "Haven't time."

The man waved his thick hand at the clock, as if to abolish time. "Time? That is nothing. Your little lady. She spoke of go back five years. Maybe I help you."

He spoke in an odd clipped way, obviously a foreigner. His shirt was yellow. His suit had a silky sheen. Its peculiar tailoring emphasized the bulges in his stubby, muscular torso.

Ann smiled back at him. "You talk as if you could take us back to 1952. Is that what you really mean?"

"Why not? You think this silly. But I can show you."

Jeff rose to go. "Mister, you better get to a doctor. Ann, it's time we started home."

ANN laid a hand on his sleeve. "I haven't finished eating. Let's chat with the gent." She added in an undertone to Jeff, "Must be a psycho—but sort of an inspired one."

The man said to Ann, "You are kind lady, I think. Good to crazy people. I join you."

He did not wait for consent, but slid into a seat at their table with an easy grace that was almost arrogant.

"You are unhappy in 1957," he went on. "Discouraged. Restless. Why not take trip to another time?"

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"Why not?" Ann said gaily. "How much does it cost?"

"Free trial trip. Cost nothing. See whether you like. Then maybe we talk money." He handed Jeff a card made of a stiff plastic substance.

Jeff glanced at it, then handed it to Ann with a half-smile. It read:

4-D TRAVEL BEURO
Greet Snader, Traffic Ajent

"Mr. Snader's bureau is different," Jeff said to his wife. "He even spells it different."

Snader chuckled. "I come from other time. We spell otherwise."

"You mean you come from the future?"

"Just different time. I show you. You come with me?"

"Come where?" Jeff asked, studying Snader's mocking eyes. The man didn't seem a mere eccentric. He had a peculiar suggestion of humor and force.

"Come on little trip to different time," invited Snader. He added persuasively, "Could be back here in hour."

"It would be painless, I suppose?" Jeff gave it a touch of derision.

"Maybe not. That is risk you take. But look at me. I make trips every day. I look damaged?"

As a matter of fact, he did. His thick-fleshed face bore a scar and his nose was broad and flat, as if it had been broken. But Jeff politely agreed that he did not look damaged.

Ann was enjoying this. "Tell me more, Mr. Snader. How does your time travel work?"

"Cannot explain. Same if you are asked how subway train works. Too complicated." He flashed his white teeth. "You think time travel not possible. Just like television not possible to your grandfather."

Ann said, "Why invite us? We're not rich enough for expensive trips."

"Invite many people," Snader said quickly. "Not expensive. You know Missing Persons lists, from police? Dozens people disappear. They go with me to other time. Many stay."

"Oh, sure," Jeff said. "But how do you select the ones to invite?"

"Find ones like you, Mr. Elliott. Ones who want change, escape."

JEFF was slightly startled. How did this fellow know his name was Elliott?

Before he could ask, Ann popped another question. "Mr. Snader, you heard us talking. You know we're in trouble because Jeff missed a good chance five years ago. Do you claim people can really go back into the past and correct mistakes they've made?"

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"They can go back. What they do when arrive? Depends on them."

"Don't you wish it were true?" she sighed to Jeff.

"You afraid to believe," said Snader, a glimmer of amusement in his restless eyes. "Why not try? What you lose? Come on, look at station. Very near here."

Ann jumped up. "It might be fun, Jeff. Let's see what he means, if anything."

Jeff's puse quickened. He too felt a sort of midsummer night's madness — a yearning to forget his troubles. "Okay, just for kicks. But we go in my car."

Snader moved ahead to the cashier's stand. Jeff watched the weasellike grace of his short, broad body.

"This is no ordinary oddball," Jeff told Ann. "He's tricky. He's got some gimmick."

"First I just played him along, to see how loony he was," Ann said. "Now I wonder who's kidding whom." She concluded thoughtfully, "He's kind of handsome, in a tough way."

II

SNADER'S "station" proved to be a middle-sized, middle-cost home in a good neighborhood. Lights glowed in the windows. Jeff could hear the whisper of traffic on a boulevard a few blocks away. Through the warm dusk, he could dimly see the mountains on the horizon. All was peaceful.

Snader unlocked the front door with a key which he drew from a fine metal chain around his neck. He swept open the front door with a flourish and beamed at them, but Ann drew back.

"'Walk into my parlor, said the spider to the fly,'" she murmured to Jeff. "This could be a gambling hell. Or a dope den."

"No matter what kind of clip joint, it can't clip us much," he said. "There's only four bucks in my wallet. My guess is it's a 'temple' for some daffy religious sect."

They went in. A fat man smiled at them from a desk in the hall. Snader said, "Meet Peter Powers. Local agent of our bureau."

The man didn't get up, but nodded comfortably and waved them toward the next room, after a glance at Snader's key.

The key opened this room's door, too. Its spring lock snapped shut after them.

The room was like a doctor's waiting room, with easy chairs along the walls. Its only peculiar aspects were a sign hanging from the middle of the ceiling and two movie screens — or were they giant television screens? — occupying a whole wall at either end of the room.

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The sign bore the number 701 in bright yellow on black. Beneath it, an arrow pointed to the screen on the left with the word *Ante,* and to the right with the word *Post.*

Jeff studied the big screens. On each, a picture was in motion. One appeared to be moving through a long corridor, lined with seats like a railroad club car. The picture seemed to rush at them from the left wall. When he turned to the right, a similar endless chair-lined corridor moved toward him from that direction.

"Somebody worked hard on this layout," he said to Snader. "What's it for?"

"Time travel," said Snader. "You like?"

"Almost as good as Disneyland. These movies represent the stream of time, I suppose?"

INSTEAD of answering, Snader pointed to the screen. The picture showed a group of people chatting in a fast-moving corridor. As it hurtled toward them, Snader flipped his hand in a genial salute. Two people in the picture waved back.

Ann gasped. "It was just as if they saw us."

"They did," Snader said. "No movie. Time travelers. In fourth dimension. To you, they look like flat picture. To them, we look flat."

"What's he supposed to be?" Jeff asked as the onrushing picture showed them briefly a figure bound hand and foot, huddled in one of the chairs. He stared at them piteously for an instant before the picture surged past.

Snader showed his teeth. "That was convict from my time. We have criminals, like in your time. But we do not kill. We make them work. Where he going? To end of line. To earliest year this time groove reach. About 600 A.D., your calendar. Authorities pick up when he get there. Put him to work."

"What kind of work?" Jeff asked.

"Building the groove further back."

"Sounds like interesting work."

Snader chortled and slapped him on the back. "Maybe you see it some day, but forget that now. You come with me. Little trip."

Jeff was perspiring. This was odder than he expected. Whatever the fakery, it was clever. His curiosity as a technician made him want to know about it. He asked Snader, "Where do you propose to go? And how?"

Snader said, "Watch me. Then look at other wall."

He moved gracefully to the screen on the left wall, stepped into it and disappeared. It was as if he had slid into opaque water.

Jeff and Ann blinked in mysti-

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fication. Then they remembered his instruction to watch the other screen. They turned. After a moment, in the far distance down the long moving corridor, they could see a stocky figure. The motion of the picture brought him nearer. In a few seconds, he was recognizable as Snader—and as the picture brought him forward, he stepped down out of it and was with them again.

"Simple," Snader said. "I rode to next station. Then crossed over. Took other carrier back here."

"Brother, that's the best trick I've seen in years," Jeff said. "How did you do it? Can I do it, too?"

"I show you." Grinning like a wildcat, Snader linked his arms with Ann and Jeff, and walked them toward the screen. "Now," he said. "Step in."

JEFF submitted to Snader's pressure and stepped cautiously into the screen. Amazingly, he felt no resistance at all, no sense of change or motion. It was like stepping through a fogbank into another room.

In fact, that was what they seemed to have done. They were in the chair-lined corridor. As Snader turned them around and seated them, they faced another moving picture screen. It seemed to rush through a dark tunnel to-

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ward a lighted square in the far distance.

The square grew on the screen. Soon they saw it was another room like the waiting room they had left, except that the number hanging from the ceiling was 702. They seemed to glide through it. Then they were in the dark tunnel again.

Ann was clutching Jeff's arm. He patted her hand. "Fun, hey? Like Alice through the looking-glass."

"You really think we're going back in time?" she whispered.

"Hardly! But we're seeing a million-dollar trick. I can't even begin to figure it out yet."

Another lighted room grew out of the tunnel on the screen, and when they had flickered through it, another and then another.

"Mr. Snader," Ann said unsteadily, "how long — how many years back are you taking us?"

Snader was humming to himself. "Six years. Station 725 fine place to stop."

For a little while, Jeff let himself think it might be true. "Six years ago, your dad was alive," he mused to Ann. "If this should somehow be real, we could see him again."

"We could if we went to our house. He lived with us then, remember? Would we see ourselves, six years younger? Or would —"

Snader took Jeff's arm and

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pulled him to his feet. The screen was moving through a room numbered 724.

"Soon now," Snader grunted happily. "Then no more questions."

He took an arm of each as he had before. When the screen was filled by a room with the number 725, he propelled them forward into it.

Again there was no sense of motion. They had simply stepped through a bright wall they could not feel. They found themselves in a replica of the room they had left at 701. On the wall, a picture of the continuous club-car corridor rolled toward them in a silent, endless stream.

"The same room," Ann said in disappointment. "They just changed the number. We haven't been anywhere."

SNADER was fishing under his shirt for the key. He gave Ann a glance that was almost a leer. Then he carefully unlocked the door.

In the hall, a motherly old lady bustled up, but Snader brushed past her. "Official," he said, showing her the key. "No lodging."

He unlocked the front door without another word and carefully shut it behind them as Jeff and Ann followed him out of the house.

"Hey, where's my car?" Jeff demanded, looking up and down the street.

The whole street looked different. Where he had parked his roadster, there was now a long black limousine.

"Your car is in future," Snader said briskly. "Where it belong. Get in." He opened the door of the limousine.

Jeff felt a little flame of excitement licking inside him. Something was happening, he felt. Something exciting and dangerous.

"Snader," he said, "if you're kidnaping us, you made a mistake. Nobody on Earth will pay ransom for us."

Snader seemed amused. "You are foolish fellow. Silly talk about ransom. You in different time now."

"When does this gag stop?" Jeff demanded irritably. "You haven't fooled us. We're still in 1957."

"You are? Look around."

Jeff looked at the street again. He secretly admitted to himself that these were different trees and houses than he remembered. Even the telephone poles and street lights seemed peculiar, vaguely foreign-looking. It must be an elaborate practical joke. Snader had probably ushered them into one house, then through a tunnel and out another house.

"Get in," Snader said curtly.

Jeff decided to go along with

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the hoax or whatever it was. He could see no serious risk. He helped Ann into the back seat and sat beside her. Snader slammed the door and slid into the driver's seat. He started the engine with a roar and they rocketed away from the curb, narrowly missing another car.

Jeff yelled, "Easy, man! Look where you're going!"

Snader guffawed. "Tonight, you look where you are going."

Ann clung to Jeff. "Did you notice the house we came out of?"

"What about it?"

"It looked as though they were afraid people might try to break in. There were bars at the windows."

"Lots of houses are built that way, honey. Let's see, where are we?" He glanced at house numbers. "This is the 800 block. Remember that. And the street—" He peered up at a sign as they whirled around a corner. "The street is Green Thru-Way. I never heard of a street like that."

III

THEY were headed back toward what should have been the boulevard. The car zoomed through a cloverleaf turn and up onto a broad freeway. Jeff knew for certain there was no freeway there in 1957—nor in any earlier year. But on the horizon, he could see the familiar dark bulk of the mountains. The whole line of moonlit ridges was the same as always.

"Ann," he said slowly, "I think this is for real. Somehow I guess we escaped from 1957. We've been transported in time."

She squeezed his arm. "If I'm dreaming, don't wake me! I was scared a minute ago. But now, oh, boy!"

"Likewise. But I still wonder what Snader's angle is." He leaned forward and tapped the driver on his meaty shoulder. "You brought us into the future instead of the past, didn't you?"

It was hard to know whether Snader was sleepy or just bored, but he shrugged briefly to show there was no reply coming. Then he yawned.

Jeff smiled tightly. "I guess we'll find out in good time. Let's sit back and enjoy the strangest ride of our lives."

As the limousine swept along through the traffic, there were plenty of big signs for turn-offs, but none gave any hint where they were. The names were unfamiliar. Even the language seemed grotesque. "Rite Channel for Creepers," he read. "Yaw for Torrey Rushway" flared at him from a fork in the freeway.

"This can't be the future," Ann said. "This limousine is almost new, but it doesn't even have an

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automatic gear shift—"

She broke off as the car shot down a ramp off the freeway and pulled up in front of an apartment house. Just beyond was a big shopping center, ablaze with lights and swarming with shoppers. Jeff did not recognize it, in spite of his familiarity with the city.

Snader bounded out, pulled open the rear door and jerked his head in a commanding gesture. But Jeff did not get out. He told Snader, "Let's have some answers before we go any further."

Snader gave him a hard grin. "You hear everything upstairs."

The building appeared harmless enough. Jeff looked thoughtfully at Ann.

She said, "It's just an apartment house. We've come this far. Might as well go in and see what's there."

Snader led them in, up to the sixth floor in an elevator and along a corridor with heavy carpets and soft gold lights. He knocked on a door.

A TALL, silver-haired, important-looking man opened it and greeted them heartily.

"Solid man, Greet!" he exclaimed. "You're a real scratcher! And is this our sharp?" He gave Jeff a friendly but appraising look.

"Just what you order," Snader said proudly. "His name—Jeff Elliott. Fine sharp. Best in his circuit. He brings his lifemate, too. Ann Elliott."

The old man rubbed his smooth hands together. "Prime! I wish joy," he said to Ann and Jeff. "I'm Septo Kersey. Come in. Bullen's waiting."

He led them into a spacious drawing room with great windows looking out on the lights of the city. There was a leather chair in a corner, and in it sat a heavy man with a grim mouth. He made no move, but grunted a perfunctory "Wish joy" when Kersey introduced them. His cold eyes studied Jeff while Kersey seated them in big chairs.

Snader did not sit down, however. "No need for me now," he said, and moved toward the door with a mocking wave at Ann.

Bullen nodded. "You get the rest of your pay when Elliott proves out."

"Here, wait a minute!" Jeff called. But Snader was gone.

"Sit still," Bullen growled to Jeff. "You understand radioptics?"

The blood went to Jeff's head. "My business is television, if that's what you mean. What's this about?"

"Tell him, Kersey," the big man said, and stared out the window.

Kersey began, "You understand, I think, that you have come

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back in time. About six years back."

"That's a matter of opinion, but go on."

"I am general manager of Continental Radioptic Combine, owned by Mr. Dumont Bullen." He nodded toward the big man. "Chromatics have not yet been developed here in connection with radioptics. They are well understood in your time, are they not?"

"What's chromatics? Color television?"

"Exactly. You are an expert in — ah — colored television, I think."

Jeff nodded. "So what?"

The old man beamed at him. "You are here to work for our company. You will enable us to be first with chromatics in this time wave."

Jeff stood up. "Don't tell me who I'll work for."

BULLEN slapped a big fist on the arm of his chair. "No fog about this! You're bought and paid for, Elliott! You'll get a fair labor contract, but you do what I say!"

"Why, the man thinks he owns you." Ann laughed shakily.

"You'll find my barmen know their law," Bullen said. "This isn't the way I like to recruit. But it was only way to get a man with your knowledge."

Kersey said politely, "You are here illegally, with no immigrate permit or citizen file. Therefore you cannot get work. But Mr. Bullen has taken an interest in your trouble. Through his influence, you can make a living. We even set aside an apartment in this building for you to live in. You are really very luxe, do you see?"

Jeff's legs felt weak. These highbinders seemed brutally confident. He wondered how he and Ann would find their way home through the strange streets. But he put on a bold front.

"I don't believe your line about time travel and I don't plan to work for you," he said. "My wife and I are walking out right now. Try and stop us, legally or any other way."

Kersey's smooth old face turned hard. But, unexpectedly, Bullen chuckled deep in his throat. "Good pop and bang. Like to see it. Go on, walk out. You hang in trouble, call up here — Butterfly 9, ask for Bullen. Whole exchange us. I'll meet you here about eleven tomorrow pre-noon."

"Don't hold your breath. Let's go, Ann."

When they were on the sidewalk, Ann took a deep breath. "We made it. For a minute, I thought there'd be a brawl. Why did they let us go?"

"No telling. Maybe they're harmless lunatics — or practical

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jokers." He looked over his shoulder as they walked down the street, but there was no sign of pursuit. "It's a long time since supper."

HER hand was cold in his and her face was white. To take her mind off their problem, he ambled toward the lighted shop windows.

"Look at that sign," he said, pointing to a poster over a display of neckties. "'Sleek neck-sashes, only a Dick and a dollop!' How do they expect to sell stuff with that crazy lingo?"

"It's jive talk. They must cater to the high-school crowd." Ann glanced nervously at the strolling people around them. "Jeff, where are we? This isn't any part of the city I've ever seen. It doesn't even look much like America." Her voice rose. "The way the women are dressed—it's not old-fashioned, just different."

"Baby, don't be scared. This is an adventure. Let's have fun." He pressed her hand soothingly and pulled her toward a lunch counter.

If the haberdasher's sign was jive, the restaurant spoke the same jargon. The signs on the wall and the bill of fare were baffling. Jeff pondered the list of beef shingles, scorchers, smack sticks and fruit chills, until he noticed that a couple at the counter were eating what clearly were hamburgers—though the "buns" looked more like tortillas.

Jeff jerked his thumb at them and told the waitress, "Two, please."

When the sandwiches arrived, they were ordinary enough. He and Ann ate in silence. A feeling of foreboding hung over them.

When they finished, the clerk gave him a check marked 1/20. Jeff looked at it thoughtfully, shrugged and handed it to the cashier with two dollar bills.

The man at the desk glanced at them and laughed. "Stage money, eh?"

"No, that's good money," Jeff assured him with a rather hollow smile. "They're just new bills, that's all."

The cashier picked one up and looked at it curiously. "I'm afraid it's no good here," he said, and pushed it back.

The bottom dropped out of Jeff's stomach. "What kind of money do you want? This is all I have."

The cashier's smile faded. He caught the eye of a man in uniform on one of the stools. The uniform was dark green, but the man acted like a policeman. He loomed up beside Jeff.

"What's the rasper?" he demanded. Other customers, waiting to pay their checks, eyed Jeff curiously.

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"I guess I'm in trouble," Jeff told him. "I'm a stranger here and I got something to eat under the impression that my money was legal tender. Do you know where I can exchange it?"

THE officer picked up the dollar bill and fingered it with evident interest. He turned it over and studied the printing. "United States of America," he read aloud. "What are those?"

"It's the name of the country I come from," Jeff said carefully. "I — uh — got on the wrong train, apparently, and must have come further than I thought. What's the name of this place?"

"This is Costa, West Goodland, in the Continental Federation. Say, you must come from an umpty remote part of the world if you don't know about this country." His eyes narrowed. "Where'd you learn to speak Federal, if you come from so far?"

Jeff said helplessly, "I can't explain, if you don't know about the United States. Listen, can you take me to a bank, or some place where they know about foreign exchange?"

The policeman scowled. "How'd you get into this country, anyway? You got immigrate clearance?"

An angry muttering started among the bystanders.

The policeman made up his mind. "You come with me."

At the police station, Jeff put his elbows dejectedly on the high counter while the policeman talked to an officer in charge. Some men whom Jeff took for reporters got up from a table and eased over to listen.

"I don't know whether to charge them with fakemake, bumsy, peekage or lunate," the policeman said as he finished.

His superior gave Jeff a long puzzled stare.

Jeff sighed. "I know it sounds impossible, but a man brought me in something he claimed was a time traveler. You speak the same language I do — more or less — but everything else is kind of unfamiliar. I belong in the United States, a country in North America. I can't believe I'm so far in the future that the United States has been forgotten."

There ensued a long, confused, inconclusive interrogation.

The man behind the desk asked questions which seemed stupid to Jeff and got answers which probably seemed stupid to him.

The reporters quizzed Jeff gleefully. "Come out, what are you advertising?" they kept asking. "Who got you up to this?"

The police puzzled over his driver's license and the other cards in his wallet. They asked repeatedly about the lack of a "Work License," which Jeff took

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to be some sort of union card. Evidently there was grave doubt that he had any legal right to be in the country.

In the end, Jeff and Ann were locked in separate cells for the night. Jeff groaned and pounded the bars as he thought of his wife, imprisoned and alone in a smelly jail. After hours of pacing the cell, he lay down in the cot and reached automatically for his silver pillbox. Then he hesitated.

In past weeks, his insomnia had grown worse and worse, so that lately he had begun taking stronger pills. After a longing glance at the big red and yellow capsules, he put the box away. Whatever tomorrow brought, it wouldn't find him slow and drowsy.

IV

HE PASSED a wakeful night. In the early morning, he looked up to see a little man with a briefcase at his cell door.

"Wish joy, Mr. Elliott," the man said coolly. "I am one of Mr. Bullen's barmen. You know, represent at law? He sent me to arrange your release, if you are ready to be reasonable."

Jeff lay there and put his hands behind his head. "I doubt if I'm ready. I'm comfortable here. By the way, how did you know where I was?"

"No problem. When we read in this morning's newspapers about a man claiming to be a time traveler, we knew."

"All right. Now start explaining. Until I understand where I am, Bullen isn't getting me out of here."

The lawyer smiled and sat down. "Mr. Kersey told you yesterday—you've gone back six years. But you'll need some mental gymnastics to understand. Time is a dimension, not a stream of events like a movie film. A film never changes. Space does—and time does. For example, if a movie showed a burning house at Sixth and Main, would you expect to find a house burning whenever you returned to that corner?"

"You mean to say that if I went back to 1865, I wouldn't find the Civil War was over and Lincoln had been assassinated?"

"If you go back to the time you call 1865—which is most easily done—you will find that the people there know nothing of a Lincoln or that war."

Jeff looked blank. "What are they doing then?"

The little man spread his hands. "What are the people doing now at Sixth and Main? Certainly not the same things they were doing the day of the fire. We're talking about a dimension, not an event. Don't you grasp the

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difference between the two?"

"Nope. To me, 1865 means the end of the Civil War. How else can you speak of a point in time except by the events that happened then?"

"Well, if you go to a place in three-dimensional space — say, a lake in the mountains — how do you identify that place? By looking for landmarks. It doesn't matter that an eagle is soaring over a mountain peak. That's only an event. The peak is the landmark. You follow me?"

"So far. Keep talking."

THE little man looked pleased. "Very well. In the fourth dimension — which is time — you do the same thing. You look around to see what is visible where you are. My contemporaries can see that freedom is unnecessary, that time travel is practical. Your people have not reached that place in time yet. But yours can see the technical facts about color television. Those facts are not visible yet to anyone here."

"You mean that these inventions —"

"Oh, no, no, no, Mr. Elliott," the little man said indignantly. "Don't call them inventions. There are no inventions. None. There are only truths — scientific principles waiting through eternity for someone to discover them."

"I must be dense, but —"

"Did your Columbus invent America? Did someone invent fire? The possibility of time travel, of color television, of any phase of social progress — these are facts. They stand up in the time dimension like mountains. Waves of humanity meander through the time dimension like caravans of immigrants crossing a continent. The first man in any wave to see the mountain peak claims that he 'invented' it. Soon it is clearly visible to everyone. While the people of my wave know of time travel, there are human caravans, following us many years back in time, just now discovering steam."

"Then the reason your people won't accept my money —"

"Yah." The little lawyer nodded. "Your money is an outgrowth of your history. It bears the name your people gave to the society they built — the United States. This has no meaning to a different wave of humanity, with a different history. These people here have reached this point in time six years behind the humanity you traveled with."

"Can I get back to my own time, my own wave of humanity?"

"Not unless you know how." The lawyer grinned. "To be perfectly frank, Mr. Elliott, there is no hope of your going back. Either work for Bullen or live out your life in a mental institution.

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No one else will give you work and no one will believe your story."

Jeff clamped his teeth. If a crook like Snader could move freely back and forth in time, there must be a way for Jeff to do it. Meanwhile, he would pretend to be a humble and obedient servant.

"Okay," he said to the lawyer. "I'm convinced. Get me out."

"Snader is waiting with a car," the man said. "He'll meet you and your wife outside. I'll free her at once, then go about my business."

SNADER was standing beside the limousine. He looked Ann up and down. "I like you, little lady. Soon I know you better."

Jeff felt his temper rise. "You sure fooled us, didn't you, Snader?"

"I warned you. There was risk."

Ann's voice was steady. "Jeff, where are we going now?"

"Back to Bullen. I understand the setup now. Maybe we'd better play ball with him."

"Did you find out what place this is?"

"Yes — well, sort of. Here's a rough rundown. Incredible as it seems, we really are in a past time period — different from our own past. This period doesn't have color TV yet. Bullen wants to be first on the market with it. So he sent our pal Greet Snader here to pick a man in future time who had already mastered TV and sell him to Bullen as a captive scientist. I imagine Snader raids the future for many experts."

Snader stepped up to him with a dangerous smile. "All right, big wit. Tell me my business. Tell me all about it."

"You heard me. You're in the slave business." The blood throbbed in Jeff's head.

"You don't like?" Snader's scarred face looked fierce and gloating. "Maybe you shovel coal from now. Or wipe floors."

Jeff saw policemen watching from the jail entrance. He clamped his mouth shut.

"Don't be excitable or you get hurt," Snader advised. "We own you. We gave you a break. Remember that, wise boy. You ready now?"

Jeff nodded silently.

Snader playfully twisted Jeff's ear and shoved him into the limousine. "Don't tell me anything. Then I don't hurt you."

V

BETWEEN Snader and Ann in the front seat, Jeff held Ann's hand and winked encouragingly at her.

"Snader, I guess you're right," he said. "This is a good deal for

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me. I was sort of washed up in my own time."

"Now you smart," Snader said. "Your little lady? She smart, too?"

"Yep. By the way, how come you got us out so early? It's only nine o'clock. Bullen said he'd expect me at eleven."

"We go to time station first," Snader explained shortly. "I pick up documents there. Breakfast there."

"Good," Jeff said cheerfully. A plan was taking shape in his mind. "All I'm worried about is my speed-up pills. Can I get some at the station? I'm almost out." He pressed Ann's knee warningly.

"Speed-up pills?" Snader looked suspicious – but then, he always did. "What you mean?"

"Don't you have speed-up tablets?" Jeff put surprise in his voice. "Stuff to activate the half of the brain that normally doesn't work. You *must* have them."

"What they look like?"

Jeff fumbled for his silver pillbox. "They're the big red and yellow capsules." He handed the box to Snader. "Don't spill them. I only have three left. Where can I get more like those? I won't be nearly as good without them."

Keeping one hand on the wheel, Snader glanced down. The box had a jumble of black vitamin pills and red and yellow sleeping tablets.

"You say these big ones help brain?" he asked warily.

"They speed up the reflexes—they make everything seem clear and easy. Please give them back before you spill them."

Snader thumbed the red and yellow capsules out and handed the box back without them. "I keep these." He moved his head craftily to watch Jeff's face in the mirror.

Jeff was ready. He registered rage and fear. "Gimme those!" he shouted. "I need them."

Snader laughed. "Don't tell me orders. Easy now. You want to wreck car?"

"I'll wreck us all if you don't give those back!" He grabbed Snader's hand.

Ann screamed as the car swerved, and horns blared from behind. Snader clapped the capsules into his mouth and gripped the wheel with both hands.

"I take what I want," he said, gulping down the pills. "You give trouble, I turn you over to police."

JEFF slumped down with a groan and buried his face in his hands to hide a grin. It had worked. How long would the nembutal take to hit Snader? It might act too fast. Jeff wondered what he could do then.

Luckily, there was only a short distance to go. Even so, the car was weaving as they whirled off

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the express road into Green Thru-Way. When they pulled up in front of the barred house, Snader tumbled out and lurched up the walk without a glance at his prisoners.

Jeff and Ann followed, and Jeff stood close behind while Snader fumbled inside his shirt for the key. When he found it and reached toward the door, his knees buckled and Jeff caught him.

"The key, Ann," Jeff whispered. "Pull the cord over his head and unlock the door."

Ann clawed at it while Jeff supported the weight of Snader's body. In a moment, she had the door open and they were inside.

The old housekeeper bustled in as Jeff half-dragged and half-lifted Snader across the living room.

"It's nothing serious," Jeff told her calmly. "He often has these attacks. He'll be all right in a few minutes, and then I'll start him off home."

"Oh, the poor man," she clucked. "Such a ghast. Can I get you anything?"

"Get us some hot water, mixed with mustard and soda," Jeff said, hoping this would keep her busy for several minutes. She hurried away.

Ann unlocked the door into the inner room and Jeff lugged the slave trader inside. On the two

screens, the endless chair-lined corridors still fled toward them.

When the door clicked shut, Jeff let Snader slide to the floor. Swiftly he went through the man's pockets and felt in the lining of his clothes for hidden documents. Papers, wallet, car-keys, a big stiff card that seemed to be some kind of passport— Jeff stuffed everything into his own pockets.

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"Hurry, Jeff," Ann begged. "Why waste time emptying his pockets?"

"So he can't come back and bother us," Jeff said. "I'm sending this joker on a one-way ride. He'll never be able to prove to the authorities who he is."

SEVERAL pictures hung on the wall. Jeff jerked them down and used the wire to tie Snader's feet and wrists. He tore some draperies to bind him tighter. When the body was trussed like a turkey, Jeff heaved it to his shoulder. With one lunge, he threw the unconscious man straight into the screen. Snader vanished.

"What happens when he wakes up?" Ann shakily wanted to know.

Jeff dusted himself off. "He's headed to the end of the line," he

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said harshly. "Remember? He told us about it. Without credentials, he'll land in the convict gang, down around the year 600 A.D. That's a bad time on this continent. Men who work there don't return — they help build back the time groove."

Ann smiled triumphantly. "Good for you! He deserved it. Imagine running a commercial kidnaping enterprise! And now we can ride home, can't we?"

Jeff, beginning to enjoy himself, shook his head. "Not just yet. First I've got a date with Mr. Bullen."

When they rapped on Bullen's door, Kersey welcomed them with an amused smile.

"We thought you would be back," he purred. "Where is Snader?"

Jeff brushed past him to the drawing room, where Bullen sat by the window.

"I've decided to help you, Bullen," Jeff said.

Bullen nodded his big head. "Naturally."

"But I name my own price. What do you pay Kersey?"

Bullen looked up with a grim smile. "Fifty thousand a year. I wonder now if he worths it."

"What's that? Dollars?"

"We call them fiscals. Probably somehow much the same. Why?"

"Listen, Bullen. If I help introduce color TV, there'll be big money in it. I won't be a hog. You pay me forty thousand a year until we go into production. Then we'll make a new deal, giving me a royalty on sales."

Kersey's face was scarlet. "You young greenshoot! Who do you think you are? You'll work for nothing, if we say so."

"Guess again," Jeff said. "Your slave trader won't be bringing any more engineers for you. So you take me at my price — or nobody."

The big man laughed. "You got rid of Snader, eh? Well, well. He was a rogue. I thought he would run into trouble soon or late."

KERSEY swore, but Bullen seemed to grasp the situation and waved him to silence. "I like your fire, young man. With chromatics, we'll make millions, so you're worth forty thousand plus royalties. Am I true in thinking you won't want the apartment I reserved for you?"

"Right. We'll retain our home in my own time. I'll commute to work here every morning — it's quicker than commuting to the city in my own time."

"In your thorough way," Kersey said sarcastically, "you have doubtless figured out how you can spend our money back in your time."

"I've thought about it," Jeff agreed. "There will be something I can convert it into and carry

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back. Diamonds, maybe."

Bullen laughed again. "You're solid, my boy. Get his work papers ready, Kersey. These young people want to get home. I'll take Jeff to the factory when he comes workward in the morning."

Jeff stood up. "See you tomorrow, Bullen. Come on, Ann. We're going home — home to our own time."

—DONALD KEITH

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FORECAST

When we started Galaxy, we had no idea that the name had been used by a 19th century magazine. An excellent magazine, by the way. Though our fields are different — it was a general publication — we are operating on the premise that one of its most famous authors, Mark Twain, laid down in its pages: Ducking out of a dull gathering, he explained that he had an appointment with a friend at the poorhouse — a former publisher who put out a newspaper that nobody disagreed with!

Never one to repeat that mistake, Galaxy this month features MY LADY GREENSLEEVES, a deceptively politely titled novella by Frederik Pohl that we hope will cause some good, healthy scraps. Extrapolating from a trend that began in prehistory, Pohl reaches this point in the future: When a prison-guard captain smells trouble, you can bet trouble is going to come — for a nose for trouble is just one of the very many talents that this society singlemindedly breeds!

You will also meet a nimble newcomer, Stephen Barr, whose I AM A NUCLEUS is a fast-stepping novelet that does not slow down even after it finishes! There is no doubt whatever about it, the hero of Barr's tricky, intriguing, immensely tense story has the Indian sign on him — his comfortably untidy world has suddenly turned into a monstrosity of order!

Accompanying at least another novelet and several short stories, Willy Ley brings us right up to the last second of the minute with exactly what it is that stands BETWEEN US AND SPACE TRAVEL.

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THE HAUNTED CORPSE

By FREDERIK POHL

With Horn's invention, we had the world by the tail, by Gad . . . or was that our own tail?

WELL, we moved in pretty promptly. This Van Pelt turned up at the Pentagon on a Thursday, and by the following Monday, I had a task force of a hundred and thirty-five men with full supply bivouacked around the old man's establishment.

He didn't like it. I rather expected he wouldn't. He came storming out of the big house as the trucks came in. "Get out of here! Go on, get out! This is private property and you're trespassing. I won't have it, do you hear me? Get out!"

I stepped out of the jeep and

Illustrated by GAUGHAN

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gave him a soft salute. "Colonel Windermere, sir. My orders are to establish a security cordon around your laboratories. Here you are, sir—your copy of the orders."

He scowled and fussed and finally snatched the orders out of my hand. Well, they were signed by General Follansbee himself, so there wasn't much argument. I stood by politely, prepared to make matters as painless for him as I could. I don't hold with antagonizing civilians unnecessarily. But he evidently didn't want it to be painless.

"Van Pelt!" he bellowed. "Why, that rotten, decrepit, back-stabbing monster of a—"

I listened attentively. He was very good. What he was saying, in essence, was that he felt his former associate, Van Pelt, had had no right to report to the Pentagon that there was potential military applicability in the Horn Effect. Of course, it was the trimmings with which he stated his complaint that made it so effective.

I finally had to interrupt him. "Dr. Horn, the general asked me to give you his personal assurance that we will not in any way interfere with your work here. It is only a matter of security. I'm sure you understand the importance of security, sir."

"Security! Now listen here, Lieuenant, I won't tolerate—"

"Colonel, sir. Lieutenant Colonel Windermere."

"Colonel, general, lieutenant, what the hell do I care? Listen to me! The Horn Effect is my personal property, not yours, not Van Pelt's, not the government's, not anybody's but mine! I was working in personality dissociation before you were born and—"

"Security, sir!" I made it crackle.

HE LOOKED at me pop-eyed and I nodded toward my driver.

"He isn't cleared, Dr. Horn," I explained. "All right, O'Hare. You're dismissed."

Sergeant O'Hare saluted from behind the wheel and took off.

I said soothingly: "Now, Dr. Horn, I want you to know that I'm here to help you. If there's anything you want, just ask; I'll get it. Even if you want to go into town, that can be arranged. Of course, you'd better give us twenty-four hours' notice so we can arrange a route and—"

He said briefly: "Young man, go to the devil." And he turned and stalked into the big house. I watched him and I remember thinking that, for a lean old goat of eighty or eighty-five, he had a lot of spirit.

I went about my business and Dr. Horn picked up the phone in

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his house and demanded the Pentagon to protest our being here. When he finally realized he was talking to our intercept monitor, and that no calls would go out on his line without authorization from me, he yelled up another storm.

But naturally that wasn't going to get him anywhere. Not when General Follansbee himself had signed the orders.

About oh-eight-hundred the next morning, I ran a surprise full-scale inspection and simulated infiltration to keep the detachment on its toes. It all checked out perfectly. I had detailed Sergeant O'Hare to try to sneak in from the marshland south of the old man's place, and he was spotted fifty yards from the perimeter. When he reported to me, he was covered with mud and shaking.

"Those trigger-happy ba—those guards, sir, nearly blew my head off. If the officer of the day hadn't happened by, I think they would of done it, only he recognized me."

"All right, Sergeant." I dismissed him and went in to breakfast. The wire-stringing detail had worked all night and we were now surrounded with triple-strand electrified barbwire, with an outer line of barbwire chevaux-de-frise. There were guard towers every fifty yards and at the corners, and a construction detail was clearing the brush for an additional twenty yards outside the wire. I thought briefly of bulldozing a jeep-path in the cleared area for permanent rotating patrols, but it didn't really seem necessary.

I was rather hungry and a little sleepy—that wire-stringing detail had made quite a lot of noise. But on the whole, I was pleased, if a little irritable.

THE O.D. phoned in for instructions while I was breakfasting; Van Pelt had arrived from town and the O.D. wouldn't let him in without my approval. I authorized it, and in a moment Van Pelt turned up in my private mess, looking simultaneously worried and jubilant.

"How'd he take it, Colonel?" he asked. "Is he—I mean is he sore?"

"Very."

"Oh." Van Pelt quivered slightly, then shrugged. "Well, you're here, so I guess he won't try anything." He looked hungrily at my buckwheat cakes and sausages. "I, uh, didn't get a chance to have breakfast on the way down—"

"Be my guest, Dr. Van Pelt." I ordered another place set and extra portions of everything. He ate it all—God knows how. Looking at him, you'd think he could march two hundred miles on the stored fat he already had. He

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wasn't much over five-six, perhaps five-seven, and I'd guess two hundred and eighty pounds bone-dry. He was about as unlike Dr. Horn as you could imagine.

I wondered how they had got along, working together — but I already knew the answer. They got along badly, else Van Pelt never would have gone running to the Pentagon. I tried to keep an open mind about that, of course. I mean General Follansbee thought it was important to national defense, and so on —

But I couldn't help thinking how I would feel if some junior went over my head in that way. Military discipline is one thing, and civilian affairs, as I understand it, are something else, but all the same —

Anyway, he had done it and here we were. Not much like a fighting command for me, but orders are orders.

At fourteen hundred, I paid a call on Dr. Horn.

He looked up as the clerk-typist corporal and I came in. He didn't say anything, just stood up and pointed to the door.

I said: "Good afternoon, Dr. Horn. If this is an inconvenient time for you to make your daily progress report, just say the word. I'm here to help you, you know. Would from twelve to thirteen hundred every day be more satisfactory? Or in the morning?"

"Every *day*?"

"That's right, sir. Perhaps you didn't notice Paragraph Eight of my orders. General Follansbee's instructions were to —"

He interrupted me with a disrespectful comment on General Follansbee, but I pretended not to hear. Besides, he might have been right.

I said: "As a starter, sir, perhaps you'll be good enough to show us around the laboratories. I think you'll find that Corporal McCabe will be able to take your words down at normal speed."

"Take *what* words down?"

"Your progress report, sir. What you've accomplished in the past twenty-four hours. Only this time, of course, we'd better have a fill-in on everything to date."

He roared: *"No! I won't!* I absolutely will *not!"*

I WAS prepared for that. I let him roar. When he was through roaring, I put it to him very simply. I said: "That's the way it's going to be."

He stuttered and gagged. "Why, you stinking little two-bit Army — Listen, what's the idea —"

He stopped and looked at me, frowning. I was glad that he stopped, since in the confidential section of my orders — the paragraphs I didn't show Dr. Horn, as he was not cleared for access to such material — there had been a

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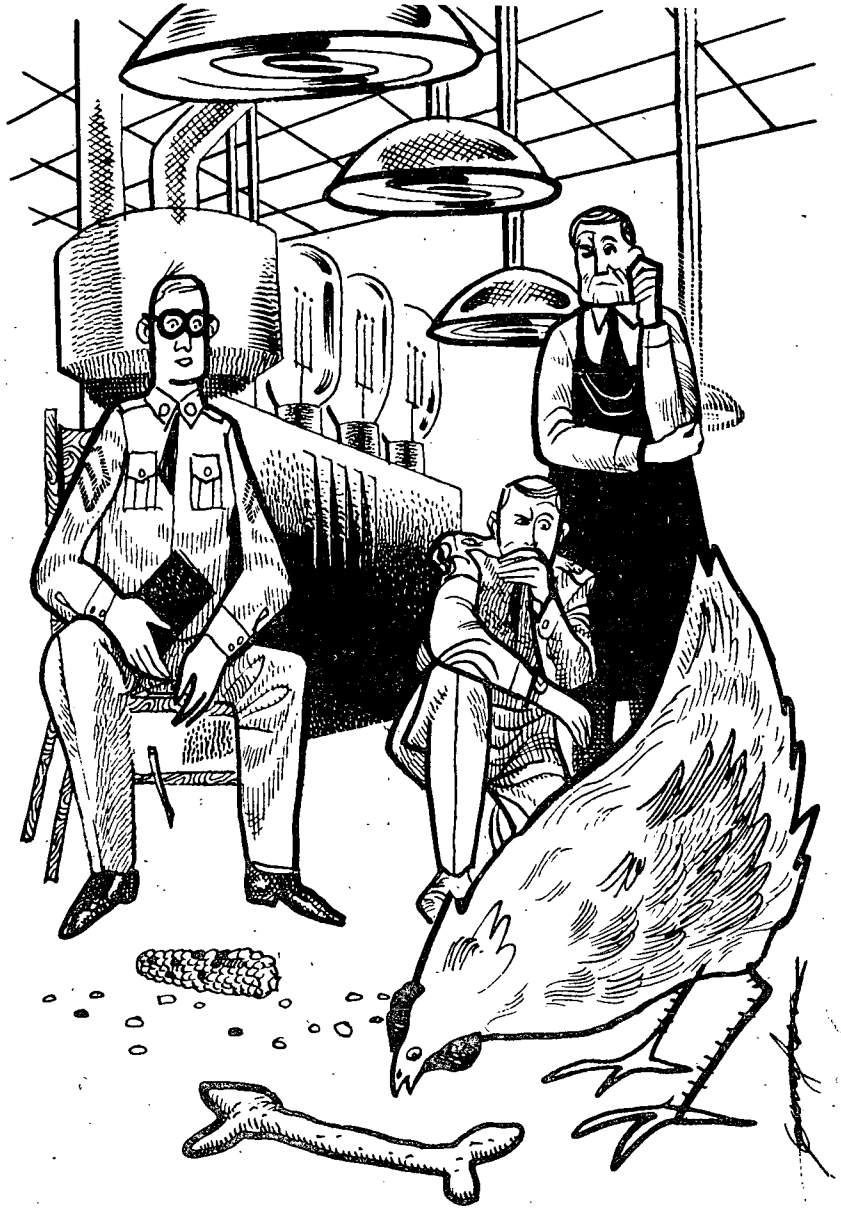

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paragraph which was relevant here.

Van Pelt had told the general that Horn's health was not good. Apoplexy, I believe—I am not very familiar with medical terms. At any rate, Van Pelt, while being de-briefed by the general's intelligence section, had reported that the old man might drop dead at any minute. Well, he looked it, at least when he was mad. I certainly didn't want him to drop dead before I had made a proper Situation Analysis, for which I needed his report.

Horn sat down. He said, with rusty craft: "You're going to stick to what you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then," he said, with a pathetic, senile cunning, "I suppose I must reconcile myself to the situation. Exactly what is it you want, Lieutenant?"

"The report, sir."

He nodded briefly. "Just so."

Ah-ha, I thought—to myself, of course—this will prove interesting. Do you suppose he will try to win my confidence so he can phone his Congressman? Or merely get me to turn my back so he can clobber me over the head?

"Yes, yes, the report. Just so," he said, staring thoughtfully at a machine of some kind. It rather resembled an SCR-784, the Mark XII model, the one that has something to do with radar, or radio, something electronic. I leave that sort of thing to the Signal Corpsmen, naturally. I have my job and they have theirs. "Just so," he repeated. "Well, I shall have to do as you wish. Observe," he said, rising, "my polycloid quasitron. As you see—"

There was a strangling noise from Corporal McCabe. I looked at him; he was in difficulties.

"Sir," I interrupted the doctor, "will you spell that, please?"

He chuckled rather grimly. "Just so. P-O-L-Y-C-L-O-I-D Q-U-A-S-I-T-R-O-N. Well, Lieutenant, you're familiar with the various potentiometric studies of the brain which— Perhaps I should begin further back. The brain, you must realize, is essentially an electrical device. Potentiometer studies have shown—"

EVERY thirty to fifty seconds, he glanced at me, and turned his head half to one side, and waited. And I said, "I see," and he said, "Just so," and he went on. Corporal McCabe was in acute distress, of course, but I rather enjoyed the exposition; it was restful. One learns to make these things restful, you see. One doesn't spend as much time as I have in staff meetings without learning a few lessons in survival tactics.

When he had entirely finished

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(McCabe was groaning softly to himself), I summed it all up for him.

"In other words, sir, you've perfected a method of electronically killing a man without touching him."

For some reason, that rocked Dr. Horn.

He stared at me. "Electronically," he said after a moment. "Killing. A man. Without. Touching. Him."

"That's what I said, sir," I agreed.

"Just so, just so." He cleared his throat and took a deep breath. "Lieutenant, will you tell me one thing? What in the sweet name of heaven did I say that gave you that particular stupid notion?"

I could hardly believe my ears. "Why – why, that's what the general said, Dr. Horn! And he talked to Van Pelt, you realize."

I wondered: Was that his little trick? Was he trying to pretend the weapon wouldn't work?

He raved for twenty-five seconds about Van Pelt. Then he checked himself and looked thoughtful again.

"No," he said. "No, it can't be Van Pelt. That idiot general of yours must be off his rocker."

I said formally: "Dr. Horn, do you state that your, ah –" I glanced at McCabe; he whispered the name – "your polycloid quasitron does not, through electronic means, deprive a person of life at a distance?"

He scowled like a maniac. It was almost as if something were physically hurting him. With an effort, he conceded: "Oh – yes. Yes, perhaps. Would you say a locomotive oxidizes coal into impure silicaceous aggregates? It does, you know – they call them ashes. Well, then, you could say that's what the quasitron does."

"Well, then!"

He said, still painfully: "All right. Just so. Yes, I see what you mean. No doubt that explains why you're here. I had wondered, I confess. You feel this is a weapon."

"Of course, sir."

"Ah."

HE SAT down and took out a fat, stickily black pipe and began to fill it. He said cheerfully: "We understand each other then. My machine renders humans into corpses. A chipped flint will also do that – Pithecanthropus erectus discovered that quite independently some time ago – but no matter, that is the aspect which interests you. Very good."

He lit the pipe. "I mention," he added, puffing, "that my quasitron does something no chipped flint can do. It removes that thing which possesses only a negative definition from the human body, the quantity that we will term

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'x', which, added to the body, produces a man, subtracted from it, leaves a corpse. You don't care about this."

He had me going for a moment, I admit. I said briskly: "Sir, I'm afraid I don't understand you."

"You're bloody well told you don't understand me!" he howled. "We're all corpses, don't you understand? Corpses inhabited by ghosts! And there's only one man in the world who can separate the two without destroying them and that's me. And there's only one way in the world to do it and that's with my quasitron! Lieutenant, you're a stupid, pigheaded man! I—"

Well, enough was enough.

"Good afternoon, sir," I said politely, though I knew he couldn't hear what I said with his own voice drowning me out. I nodded to Corporal McCabe. He closed his notebook with a snap, jumped to open the door for me and the two of us left.

There was no reason to stay, do you see? I already had all the material for my Situation Analysis.

Just the same, I got Van Pelt into my private quarters that evening. I wanted to see if I could make an assessment of the old man's sanity.

"He's perfectly sane, Colonel Windermere. Perfectly!" Van Pelt's jowls were shaking. "He's dangerous—very dangerous. Particularly dangerous to me. I mean, of course, if I hadn't had your promise of complete protection. Of course. But dangerous. I—"

He paused, glancing at the sideboard where the bowl of fruit (I always take fruit after the evening meal) still reposed. He coughed. "Colonel, I wonder if—"

"Help yourself," I told him.

"Thank you, thank you! My, but that looks good! Honestly, Colonel Windermere, I feel that an apple is almost Nature's rarest treat. Well, pears, yes. I must say that pears—"

I said: "Dr. Van Pelt, excuse me. I want the straight dope on Horn. What's this ghost business?"

He looked at me blankly, crunching. "Ghost business?" He took another bite. Crunch, crunch. "My goodness, Colonel—" crunch, crunch— "Colonel Windermere, I don't know— Oh, the *ghost* business!" Crunch. "Oh, that. Why, that's just Dr. Horn's way of putting it. You know his manner. You see, there is a difference between a living man and a dead man, and that difference is what Dr. Horn whimsically terms a 'ghost.'" He chuckled, tossed the core into my wastebasket and took another apple. "Call it life, plus intelligence, plus soul, if there is such a word in your lexicon, Colonel—Dr. Horn merely

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sums them up and terms the total 'ghost.'"

I PRESSED him closely. "This machine is a—a ghost conjurer?"

"No, no!" he cried, nearly losing his temper. "Colonel, don't permit yourself to be fooled. Dr. Horn is an arrogant, unprincipled man, but he is not an ass or a faker. Forget the term ghost, since it distresses you. Think of—think of—"

He searched for words, shrugged. "Think merely of the difference between being alive and being dead. It is that difference that Dr. Horn's machine works on. Life, intelligence—electrical phenomena, you understand? And Dr. Horn drains them from the body, stores them—can, if he wishes, replace them, or even put them in another body." He nodded, beamed at me, bit into the second apple. Crunch, crunch, crunch.

Well, sir!

When I had got rid of him, I sat, trying to control my temper, for some time.

This strange old man had a machine that could take a mind right out of a body—yes, and put it in another body!

Confound them, why hadn't they said so instead of beating around the bush?

Naturally, I didn't believe it until I saw it—and then I saw it. The next morning, at my request, Dr. Horn put a hen and a cocker spaniel into what he called his polycloid quasitron and exchanged them.

Then I believed. I saw the hen trying to wag its tail and the spaniel, whimpering, its snout bruised, endeavoring to peck corn.

Corporal McCabe's eyes were popping out of his head. He started to write something, glanced at me, shook his head slowly and sat staring into space.

Well, time for him later. I said: "You can do it, Dr. Horn. You can take a hen and put it into a cocker spaniel and vice versa."

He nodded, too stiff-necked to show his gratification. "Just so, Lieutenant."

"And—and you can do it with people, too?"

"Oh, indeed I can! Indeed I can!" He scowled. "These ridiculous laws governing the conduct of institutions! I've tried, I swear I've tried, to be permitted to conduct a simple exchange. A man dying of terminal cancer, you see, and a feeble-minded youth. Why not? Put the sound mind in the sound body and let the decayed parts rot together! But will they let me?"

"I see. Then you've never done it."

"Never." He looked at me, his old eyes gleaming. "But now

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you're here, Lieutenant. A military man. Very brave, eh? All I've needed is a volunteer. That coward Van Pelt refused, my gardener refused, everyone has refused! But you—"

"Negative, sir!" Confound the man's arrogance! "I am not a lieutenant. I am a field-grade officer! I don't imagine you appreciate the investment our service has in me!"

"But, Lieutenant, the importance—"

"Negative, sir!"

THE man's stupidity amazed me. Me, a lieutenant colonel! What would it do to my 201 file? What about my time in grade? The Pentagon would rock, literally rock!

I said, trying to be calm: "You don't understand military matters, Dr. Horn. I assure you, if there is a need for volunteers, we will find them for you. Believe me, sir, we are here to help! Why, one of our enlisted men will be pleased—proud, sir!—to offer his services in this—Corporal McCabe! Come back here!"

But it was too late. Moaning, he had fled the room.

I turned to Dr. Horn, a little embarrassed. "Well, sir, we understand these things—a shock to the boy, of course. But I'll find you a volunteer. Trust me."

The man was as pleased as a fourth-year cadet in June Week, but he still wouldn't show it. Stiffly, he said: "Just so, Lieutenant—Major, I mean. Or Captain. Tomorrow will do splendidly."

Tomorrow! That wonderful day! For I saw Dr. Horn do just as he had promised and I—I alone among them all—I saw what it meant. A weapon? Nonsense, it was much, much more than that!

There was the matter of finding volunteers. Trust me for that, as I had told Dr. Horn.

There was the latrine orderly in Able Company—AWOL, and when I explained to him what a court-martial would do, he volunteered with blinding speed. Didn't even ask what he was volunteering for.

We needed two. My executive officer, I am proud to say, volunteered to be the second. A courageous man, typical of the very best leadership type.

We arrived in Dr. Horn's laboratory. The men were strapped in place and anesthetized—at my request; I wanted to maintain security, so naturally I couldn't let them know what was happening. Just before he went under, the exec whispered, "Sir—no Korea?"

"I promise, Captain," I said solemnly, and before his eyes I ripped up the transfer recommendation I had written the night before. He went to sleep happy.

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Biz, buzz, crackle. I don't understand these scientific things, but when the electric sparks had stopped flashing and the whiny, drony sounds had died away, Dr. Horn gave them each a shot of something, one at a time.

The latrine orderly opened his eyes. I stepped before him. "Name, rank and serial number!"

"Sir," he said crisply, "Lefferts, Robert T., Captain, A.U.S., Serial Number 0-3339615!"

Good heavens! But I made sure with a test question: "Where is it you don't want to be transferred?"

"Why – why, Korea, sir. Please, sir, not there! I'll volunteer for your test. I'll –"

I nodded to Dr. Horn and another needle put him back to sleep.

Then the body that was my exec. The body opened its eyes. "Cunnel, suh! I changin' my mind. I'll take the guardhouse, suh, only –"

"At ease!" I commanded, and nodded to Dr. Horn.

There was no doubt about it. "You really did it."

He nodded. "Just so, Lieutenant. I really did."

AS HE switched them back again, I began to realize what it all meant.

In my office, I got on the phone.

"Crash priority!" I ordered. "The Pentagon! General Follansbee, priority and classified. Ask him to stand by for scrambler!"

I slapped the field phone into its case. A weapon? A weapon was nothing by comparison. We had the world by the tail. I confess I was floating on a cloud of pure joy. I saw my eagles within my grasp, perhaps, in a year or less, my first star – there was nothing the Army would deny the officer who could give them what I could offer.

A rattle and a crash, and Van Pelt thumped into my room, his face smeared, one hand clutching a melting chocolate bar. "Colonel Windermere!" he gasped. "You let Horn make his test! But that's all he's been waiting for! He–"

It was unbearable. "O'Hare!" I roared. Sergeant O'Hare appeared, looking uncomfortable. "How dare you let this man in here without my permission? Don't you realize I'm making a classified scrambler call to the *Pentagon?*"

O'Hare said weakly: "Sir, he –"

"Get him out of here!"

"Yessir!" The fat little man kicked up a fuss, but O'Hare was much bigger than he. Just the same, Van Pelt gave him a tussle. He was yelling something, all upset, but my call to the Pentagon came through and I frankly didn't listen.

"General Follansbee? Winder-

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mere here, sir. Please scramble!" I slapped the button that scrambled the call from my end. In a moment, I heard the general's voice come through in clear, but anyone tapping in on the scrambled circuit would hear nothing but electronic garbage.

I gave him a quick, concise account of what I had seen. He was irritated at first — disappointed. I had thought he would be.

"Change them around, Windermere?" he complained in a high-pitched voice. "Why, what's the use of changing them around? Do you see any strategic value in that? Might confuse them a little, I suppose — if we could get a couple of the enemy commanders. But is that all there is to it? I was looking for something bigger, Windermere, something of more immediate military advantage. That Van Pelt must learn not to waste the time of high Army officers!"

"General Follansbee, may I point out something? Suppose — suppose, sir, that someone way up top should visit the States. Suppose, for instance, that we surrounded him, him and his whole entourage. Switched them all. Put our own men in their bodies. You see?"

HE WAS thinking I was insane; you could tell it. "Colonel Windermere, what in the world are you talking about?"

"It would work, sir," I said persuasively. "Believe me, I've seen it. But suppose we couldn't do that. What about a hostile U.N. envoy, eh? Get him, put one of G-2's operatives inside his body. Do you follow me, sir? No question about whose Intelligence would get the facts in a case like that, is there, sir? Or — maybe we wouldn't want to do anything like that in peacetime, but what about in war? Take a couple of their prisoners, sir, put our own men in their bodies. Exchange the prisoners!"

Well, I went on and I won't say I convinced him of anything. But by the time he hung up, he was thinking pretty hard.

And I had an appointment to see him in the Pentagon the following day. Once I was on the spot, I knew I was in, for he wouldn't take the responsibility of passing up a thing like this alone. He'd call a staff meeting, and somewhere on the staff, somebody would understand.

I could feel the stars on my shoulders already . . .

"What is it, O'Hare?" I demanded.

I was becoming very irritated with the man. He was sticking his head in the door, looking very worried. Well, that was reasonable; I was quite close to giving him something to worry about.

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"Sir, it's that Van Pelt." He swallowed and looked a little foolish. "I—I don't know if he's nuts or what, sir, but he says—he says that Dr. Horn wants to live forever! He says all Horn was waiting for was to make a test on a human being. I don't know what he's talking about, but he says that now that you've given Horn his test, sir, Horn's going to grab the first man he sees and, uh, steal his body. Does that make sense, sir?"

Did it make *sense?*

I shoved him out of the way, stopping only to grab my sidearm.

It made all the sense in the world.

It was just what you'd expect of a man like Horn—he'd take an invention like this and use it to steal other people's bodies, to prolong his own nearly senile existence in a younger body!

And if that happened, what would become of my general's star?

Oh, I knew just the way Horn's mind would work. Steal a body; smash the machine; get away. Could we trace him? Impossible—there was no test in the world, no fingerprints, no eye-retina charts, no blood-type classifications that could distinguish John Smith from Horn inhabiting John Smith.

It was the obvious thing to do; it had occurred to me at once.

VAN PELT had gone blundering in, conquering his cowardice. His objective was to try to stop Horn, I supposed, but what was the effect of his mad rush into the laboratory? Why, to furnish Horn with a body!

And if one was not enough, there would be others, for there were the men of my own detachment, standing guard, going about their duties; it would not be impossible for Horn to lure one inside. He would not wait. No, for the chance that his own body would wear out on him in a moment, any moment, was very great—old, worn, and now subject to the pounding of a new hope and excitement, it might collapse at the lightest touch, like the bombed-out hulk of a barracks.

So I hurried—into the building, through the long dark halls, into the room where the big polycloid quasitron stood—

And I tripped over a human body, stumbled, fell, the gun spinning out of my hand. I scrambled to my hands and knees, touching the body—still warm, but not very warm. Dr. Horn! His castoff cocoon, abandoned!

And before me capered and screeched the figure that once had been Van Pelt, holding a weapon.

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"Too late!" he cried. "Too late, Colonel Windermere!"

Van Pelt! But it was not Van Pelt that lived in that fat, soft corpse today, I knew, for the Horn-in-Van-Pelt held a gun of his own in one hand and in the other a bar of metal. And with it he was bashing, bashing the polycloid quasitron! Bam, and showers of sparks flew from it; crash, and it began to glow, sag, melt.

And he had the gun. It was a very difficult situation.

But not hopeless. For we were not alone.

Next to my fallen gun lay another body. Not dead, this one; unconscious. It was Corporal McCabe, struck down with a blow to the head.

"Stop!" I cried, getting to my knees. Horn-Van Pelt turned to stare at me. "Stop, don't wreck the machine! More depends on it than you can possibly realize, Dr. Horn. It isn't only a matter of your life – trust me for that, Dr. Horn, I shall see that you have bodies, fine bodies, to hold your mind as long as you want it. But think of the safety of our country! And think of your sacred duty to science!" I appealed, thinking of my general's stars.

Corporal McCabe twitched and stirred.

I stood up. Horn's carrier, Van Pelt, dropped his iron bar in alarm, switched the gun to his right hand, stared at me. Good! Better at me than at McCabe.

I said: "You must not destroy the machine, Dr. Horn! We need it."

"But it is destroyed already," the little fat figure said stupidly, gesturing. "And I am not Dr. –"

Splat.

McCabe's bullet caught him at the base of the skull. The brain that had evicted Van Pelt to house a Horn now housed no one; the blubbery little figure was dead.

And I was raging!

"You fool, you idiot, you unutterable ass!" I screamed at McCabe. "Why did you kill him? Wing him, yes; injure him, break his leg, shoot the gun out of his hand. But now he's dead and the machine is gone!"

And so, sadly, were my general's stars.

The corporal was looking at me with a most peculiar expression.

I got hold of myself. A life's dream was gone, but there was no help for it now. Maybe the engineers could tinker and discover and rebuild – but, glancing at the wreck of the polycloid quasitron, I knew that was a dream.

I took a deep breath.

"All right, McCabe," I said crisply. "Report to your quarters. I'll talk to you later on. Right now, I must phone the Pentagon

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and try to account for your blundering in this matter!"

McCabe patted the gun fondly, put it on the floor and left. I reported manfully to the general, stood at attention while he chewed me out, and had just hung up when the phone rang and I heard McCabe's voice at the other end.

"What is it, Corporal?" I demanded, annoyed. "I'm busy!"

"I just called in to report that I haven't found quarters yet, but I will soon — very far away, Lieutenant."

"Dr. Horn!" I gasped.

"Just so, Lieutenant," he said and chuckled as he hung up.

— FREDERIK POHL

See Page 143

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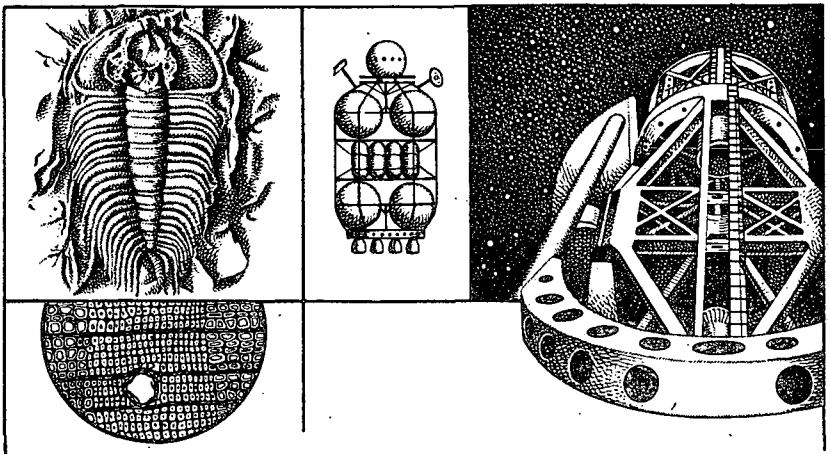

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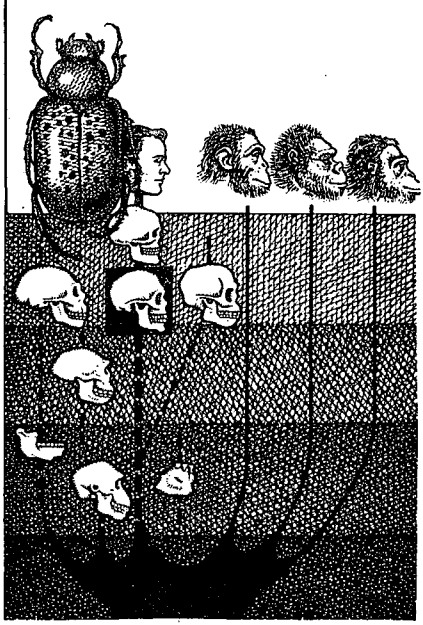

By WILLY LEY

Tracking down The "Sea Serpent"

PART II

FOR those who happened to miss last month's issue, it will be helpful to read in the most condensed form possible what was discussed in the first part of this article.

During the nineteenth century, probably as a direct result of a sharply increasing volume of ocean travel, reports about something called the "sea serpent" suddenly became rather frequent. There had been a few isolated reports from earlier dates, but all

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the really well-authenticated and well-documented (as well as unexplainable cases) began to come in following about the time of the Napoleonic wars.

The climax was reached, in a manner of speaking, when H.M.S. *Daedalus* returned from India with the report that she had, quite some distance from the African coast and between the Cape of Good Hope and St. Helena, passed a "sea serpent" swimming in the opposite direction at close range.

After this report had been published, others were submitted for publication, written by captains who had had similar experiences, but had either not bothered to have them published or else had felt it better for their reputations to keep their mouths shut.

With all these people telling what they had seen — and mostly in fine weather, so that mistakes were virtually impossible — it was clearly necessary to arrive at some sort of explanation. That the oceans might conceal an animal, even one of large size, which somehow had avoided capture all along did not seem to be a far-fetched idea.

In 1892, the Dutch zoologist professor Dr. A. C. Oudemans published a big book of nearly 600 pages which was designed to accomplish several things:

One, by an exhaustive collection of all reports, it was to prove that there actually is an unknown animal in the oceans. Two, by presenting all the evidence, it was to encourage sea captains to pay attention to similar occurrences. (More or less directly, Dr. Oudemans' book led to an order to captains of the German merchant marine to have, at all times, a loaded camera on the bridge "in order to obtain photographs of unusual cloud and wave formations, sea serpents, etc.") Three, to make what is now called an educated guess at the nature of the unknown animal.

WHAT probably surprised many readers most was the nature of this guess. Dr. Oudemans declared that the sea serpent, in spite of the established and unfortunate name, was probably a marine mammal.

As to its dimensions, one could estimate from the various reports that it might be as much as a hundred feet long, equal to the length of the largest whales known. But in bulk, it was likely to be very considerably smaller. The comparison was then made that the "sea serpent" bore about the same physical relationship to the whale as the giraffe does to the elephant.

What shape Dr. Oudemans ascribed to the animal is now easy to explain, though it wasn't in his day.

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Just imagine a brontosaur which had paddles instead of legs and—many reports insisted on this feature—a mane. As for the latter, Dr. Oudemans said, it might be a sexual ornament. Maybe only the males sport a mane. Or, possibly, only old animals of both sexes. Or only fully grown males.

The very next report that came in probably made Professor Oudemans wish that he had delayed publication of his book long enough to include it. It would have been a delay of only about two years.

The report is known as the *Umfuli* report.

The steamship *Umfuli*, commanded by Captain R. J. Cringle, was en route from London to Natal. The sighting occurred while the steamer was at lat. 21° 40′ N. and long. 17° 30′ W., which means off the west coast of Africa in about the latitude of Havana. The ship still had some distance to go until the bulge of Africa had been left to the north. The date was Monday, December 4th, 1893.

At two P.M., the mate entered "calm & smooth sea" into the log. At four P.M., he wrote "same weather," adding "P. L. 43," which means that the Patent Log showed a run of 43 miles since noon. At 5:30 P.M., he made another entry: "Sighted and passed about 500 yards from a Monster Fish of the Serpent shape, about 80 ft. long."

In addition to the mate—C. A. W. Powell, who made the log entry—the animal was seen by the captain, several members of the crew and a number of the 80 passengers she was carrying. One

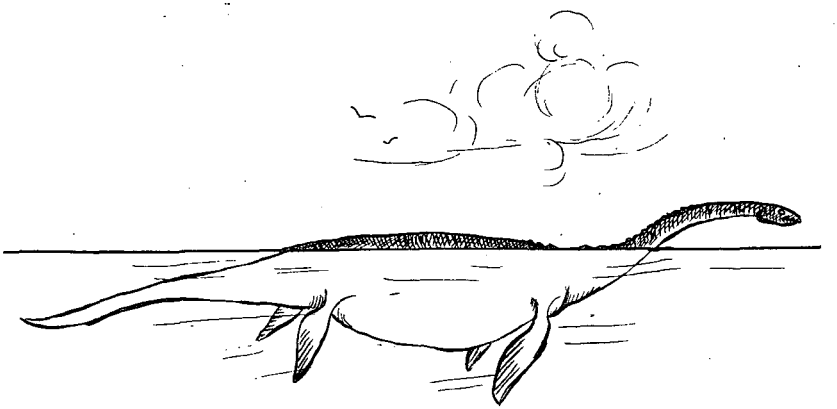

Fig. 1 Professor Oudemans' concept of the sea serpent

Drawing by Olga Ley

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of the passengers had a camera on board (still fairly rare then) but was so excited that he did not remember it until later. But Captain Cringle made a sketch (copied here as Fig. 2) and wrote a report in which he said:

It was rushing through the water at great speed, and was throwing water from its breast as a vessel throws water from her bows. I saw full 15 ft. of its head and neck on three several occasions. The body was all the time visible. . . . The base, or body, from which the neck sprang, was much thicker than the neck itself, and I should not, therefore, call it a serpent. Had it been breezy enough to ruffle the water, or hazy, I should have had some doubt about the creature; but the sea being so perfectly smooth, I had not the slightest doubt in my mind as to its being a sea-monster.

I turned the ship round to get closer to it, and got much nearer than we were at first; but the sun was then setting and the light gone, so that to have run the ship further off her course would have been folly. . . . This thing, whatever it was, was in sight for over half an hour. In fact we did not lose sight of it until darkness came on.

UNDER observation, the "sea serpent" repeatedly dipped its head into the water, causing quite a bit of spray. (Did it catch fish?) Captain Cringle believes that he saw teeth when the mouth was open. He could see the eyes clearly. The color of the animal was dark brown and the skin appeared smooth — but at a distance of 500 yards, it would be hard to tell smooth skin from wet fur.

What Captain Cringle saw and sketched was, of course, precisely the shape which Prof. Oudemans had predicted. Although I had some correspondence with Prof. Oudemans at a much later date (just before the outbreak of the Second World War), I forgot to

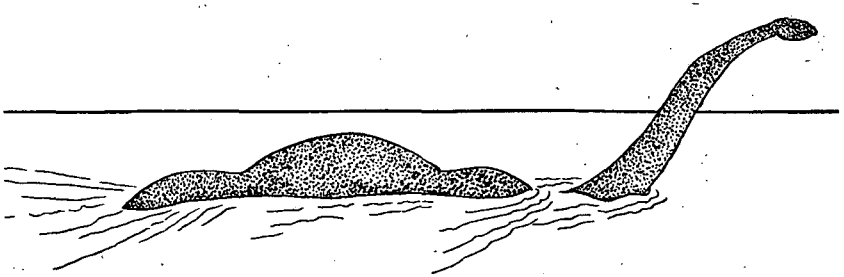

Fig. 2 Capt. Cringle's sketch of the *Umfuli* serpent

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ask him whether he ever got in touch with Captain Cringle. I know of no other report which seems to corroborate Oudemans' conclusions in such a definite manner.

But while there is none which does that, there are a few other reports that are even better. So far, the unknown animal had been seen by missionaries, by commissioned officers of the Royal Artillery of Canada, by ordnance storekeepers, British Navy officers, American merchant captains, British merchant captains, by clergymen and by Army surgeons — in short, by practically everybody except a trained zoologist.

This did not happen until 1905 and as if to make up for the delay, fate let the "sea serpent" be seen by two zoologists at the same time. They were Mr. E. G. B. Meade-Waldo and Mr. Michael J. Nicoll, both of them Fellows of the British Zoological Society. They were on board the yacht *Valhalla*, owned by the Earl of Crawford, who used it to escape the British winter, which had proved bad for his health, and who was in the habit of taking naturalists along with him on his cruises.

The *Valhalla* was cruising off Parahiba, Brazil, offshore of the easternmost point of the South American continent, when the animal was seen. The account written by Mr. Meade-Waldo for his Society (and published in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society*, 1906, p. 719) gives all the details:

On Dec. 7th, 1905, at 10:15 a.m., I was on the poop of the *Valhalla* with Mr. Nicoll, when he drew my attention to an object in the sea about 100 yards from the yacht; he said: "Is that the fin of a great fish?"

I looked and immediately saw a large fin or frill sticking out of the water, dark seaweed-brown in colour, somewhat crinkled at the edge. It was apparently about 6 feet in length and projected from 18 inches to 2 feet from the water.

I got my field-glasses on to it (a powerful pair of Goerz Trieder), and almost as soon as I had them on the frill, a great head and neck rose out of the water in front of the frill; the neck did not touch the frill in the water, but came out of the water in front of it, at a distance of certainly not less than 18 inches, probably more. The neck appeared about the thickness of a slight man's body, and from 7 to 8 feet was out of the water; head and neck were all about the same thickness.

The head had a very turtle-like appearance, as had also the eye. I could see the line of the mouth, but we were sailing pretty fast, and quickly drew away from the object, which was going very slowly. It moved its head and neck from side

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to side in a peculiar manner: the colour of the head and neck was dark brown above, and whitish below—almost white, I think.

IN SPITE of the turtlelike head, both zoologists had the impression that it was a mammal they saw. (The sketch, Fig. 3, is a copy of the one Mr. Nicoll prepared for inclusion in the *Proceedings*.) And they also said that the creature seen by H.M.S. *Daedalus* "might easily be the same."

In retrospect, it looks as if things should have built up to a climax about then. After the scientific guess came its general vindication by another encounter; after that, the first sighting by professional zoologists. Next thing should have been discovery.

But it wasn't.

There only were more reports.

In May, 1917, a British armed merchant cruiser, the *Hilary*, commanded by Captain F. W. Dean, was cruising around looking for German submarines. The place was the ocean to the south of Iceland. In fact, the vessel was so close to Iceland that the peaks could be seen from board in the brilliant sunshine of an exceptionally clear and calm day.

At about nine A.M., the captain was in his cabin, which was directly beneath the bridge, when a voice shouted down to him: "Object on the starboard quarter."

Captain Dean raced up to the bridge which, he said, took him three seconds. He took it for granted, of course, that a submarine had been sighted and asked: "Was it a periscope?"

He was assured by the officer of the watch that it had not been a periscope. "It looks more like a living thing, but it is not a whale."

Wartime must do something

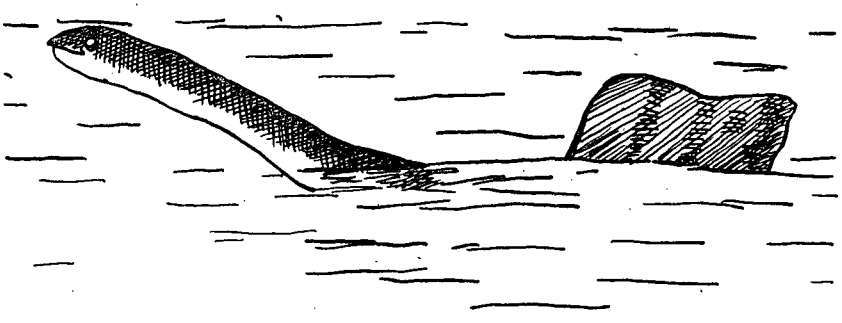

Fig. 3 Mr. Nicoll's sketch of the *Valhalla* sea serpent

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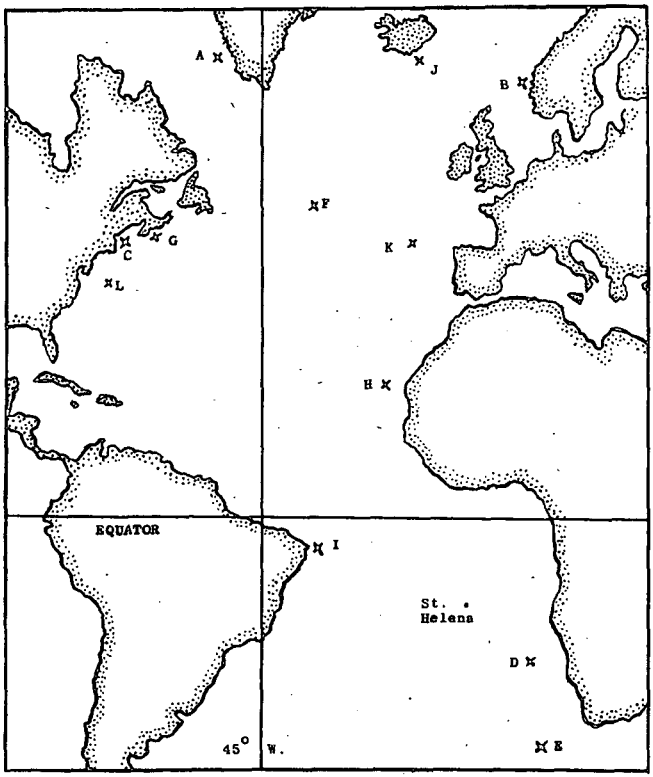
peculiar to the nerves, for Captain Dean did not have the faintest thoughts about investigation or discovery or anything of the sort. Instead, he decided that the object, even if not a German submarine, was still a good opportunity for target practice. The gun crews let go with their six-pounders and one may be permitted to remark that they did not shoot too well. Their marksmanship was such that it might have frightened a human enemy into surrender while still undamaged. Finally, however, one gun crew did score a hit.

The animal, which had paid no attention to the earlier near misses, thrashed furiously and disappeared, never to be seen again.



A. Hans Egede
B. Lorenz von Ferry
C. New England Sea Serpent
D. H.M.S. *Daedalus*
E. *Royal Saxon*
F. *Lady Combermere*
G. Halifax officers.
H. S.S. *Umfuli*
I. *Valhalla*
J. H.M.S. *Hilary*
K. Submarine *U-28*
L. S.S. *Santa Clara*

Fig. 5 Sketch map of the Atlantic Ocean with the most important sightings

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BEFORE the shooting started, Captain Dean took a careful look at the animal, which he later described as follows:

The head was about the shape of, but somewhat larger than that of, a cow, though with no observable protrusions such as horns or ears, and was black, except for the front of the face, which could be clearly seen to have a strip of whitish flesh, very like a cow has, between its nostrils. As we passed, the head raised itself two or three times, apparently to get a good look at the ship. From the back of the head to the dorsal fin no part of the creature showed above water, but the top edge of the neck was just level with the surface, and its snake-like movements could be clearly seen. (It curved to almost a semi-circle as the creature moved its head round as if to follow us with its eyes.)

The dorsal fin appeared like a black triangle, and when the creature was end on, this fin was seen to be very thin and apparently flabby, as the upper part turned over sometimes like the top of a terrier's ear when cocked. The fin was estimated to be about four feet high when in the position highest out of the water.

The distance from the head to the fin was estimated at about 20 feet or slightly less by the captain, the first lieutenant, the officer of the watch and the navigator. From this, Captain Dean inferred that the total length must have been about 60 feet.

Before that, one of the German submarines which Captain Dean was hunting had had a curious encounter itself, but the commander of the submarine deemed it wise not to talk too much about it while the war was going on. He was Captain *Freiherr* (Baron) von Forstner and he might never have written about it if it had not been for the Loch Ness case.

When the first reports from the Loch Ness were printed prominently in all European newspapers, the newspapermen, of course, badgered professional zoologists, like directors of zoological gardens, about their opinions. Since the scientists had not been to Scotland, had never seen the supposed animal reported from there, and had a few other things on their minds anyway, they could not give much of an answer. But one said that all sea serpent reports were so old that one might distrust them on principle and that he would prefer to hear something more than the *Daedalus* story.

Whereupon Baron von Forstner decided to tell him something more recent, namely his own wartime experience:

On July 30, 1915, our *U-28* torpedoed in the North Atlantic the

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British steamer *Iberian* (5223 tons) loaded with valuable goods. The ship, which was about 180 meters long, sank rapidly, stern first, the depth at this point being a few thousand meters. When the steamer had disappeared for about 25 seconds it exploded at a depth which we could not know, but one thousand meters will be a safe guess. Shortly afterwards pieces of wreckage, among them a huge marine animal which made violent movements, were thrown out of the water, flying approximately 20 or 30 meters high.

At this moment we were six men on the bridge, myself, the two officers of the watch, the chief engineer, the navigator and the helmsman. We at once centered our attention upon this marvel of the seas. Unfortunately we had not time to take a photograph because the animal disappeared in the water after 10 or 15 seconds. It was about 20 meters (66 feet) long, looked like a giant crocodile, and had four powerful paddle-like limbs and a long pointed head.

The explanation of this event seems easy to me. The explosion of, or in, the sinking steamer caught the "undersea-crocodile," as we called it, and forced it out of the water.

When somebody tried to cast doubts upon this, Baron von Forstner declared firmly that this was what happened and that he "would not give up a single meter of the length of his animal." And another German submarine captain came to his aid. He had seen such an animal while cruising submerged in the North Atlantic.

Captain von Forstner and Commander Gould then collaborated on a German edition of the latter's book *The Case for the Sea Serpent* in the hope of uncovering more reports. But to the best of my knowledge, none came.

THERE have been a few more sightings, however, in addition to the somewhat dubious Loch Ness case. There is one from the sea near Scotland, one from Alaska and one from the vicinity of San Clemente island off California. But like many others, they are just sightings, probably exciting enough to the people to whom they happen, but nothing really new.

Yet something may happen any day.

I am quite sure that nobody thought of sea monsters between Christmas and New Year of 1947. But the Grace Line steamer *Santa Clara* literally ran into one on December 30, 1947, at 11:55 A.M.

The time of day is so exactly established because the officers of the ship were just getting ready for the noon sight. The place was 118 miles due east of Cape Lookout and the *Santa Clara* had just crossed the Gulf Stream while

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sailing for Cartagena. The weather was perfectly clear, with blue sky and bright sunshine, and the sea was calm.

The story by the master of the *Santa Clara*, J. Fordan, which was distributed by the Associated Press, read in part:

Suddenly John Axelson (the third mate) saw a snakelike head rear out of the sea about 30 feet off the starboard bow of the vessel. His exclamation of amazement directed the attention of the other two mates to the sea monster and the three watched it unbelievingly as, in a moment's time, it came abeam of the bridge where they stood, and was then left astern.

The creature's head appeared to be about 2½ feet across, 2 feet thick and 5 feet long. The cylindrically shaped body was about 3 feet thick and the neck about 1½ feet in diameter.

As the monster came abeam of the bridge it was observed that the water around the monster, over an area of 30 or 40 feet square, was stained red. The visible part of the body was about 35 feet long. It was assumed that the color of the water was due to the creature's blood and that the stem of the ship had cut the monster in two, but as there was no observer on the other side of the vessel there was no way of estimating what length of body may have been left on the other side.

From the time the monster was first sighted until it disappeared in the distance astern, it was thrashing about as though in agony. The monster's skin was dark brown, slick and smooth. There were no fins, hair, or protuberances on the head, neck or visible parts of the body.

WELL, what now? The answer is unsatisfyingly simple—now we wait.

To doubt that there is a large, long-necked unknown animal in the ocean would be very foolish under the circumstances. In appearance, it seems to resemble the extinct plesiosaurs rather closely. True, they were all smaller than the dimensions reported for the "sea serpent," but this is no argument. Today's horses are also larger than those of the past. Yet in spite of the external resemblance to the plesiosaurs, Oudemans was probably right—the animal does not seem to be a reptile, like the plesiosaurs, but a mammal.

The rather numerous appearances in cold waters speak in favor of this assumption. So does the mane, even if it was seen only rarely, for where there is a mane, there is likely to be a fur. Finally—this happens to be the age of mammals.

Whatever it is, it seems to be an animal of the high seas which does not come close to the shore,

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save in most exceptional circumstances. It is obviously rarer than the whales, though nobody can say how rare. But the case of the fish *Latimeria* comes to mind here again. Once thought to be wholly extinct, a single specimen was caught by accident and, since it remained the only one for about a decade, the fish was thought to be incredibly rare. Actually scientists just did not know where to look for Latimeria.

One may ask, of course, why no dead "sea serpent" has ever been washed ashore. The claim that just this occurred in one locality or another is not really rare, but when the "sea serpent" could be inspected by naturalists, the claim was always found to be mistaken.

Sometimes the dead "sea serpent" was a half-decayed large shark. More than once, it turned out to be the mutilated body of a dolphin — mutilated not by some sea monster, but by such prosaic an agency as the propeller of a steamship. Quite often, the dead or still barely living "sea serpent" turned out to be an oarfish, also called ribbon fish. This strange inhabitant of the Atlantic will grow to a length of 30 feet and possibly more, being only inches thick.

It is true that there are a few reports of things washed ashore that could not be identified, but they could not even be definitely declared to be unknown.

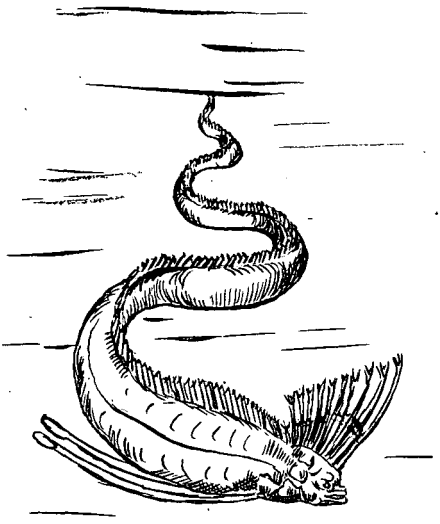

Fig. 4 One culprit — the ribbon fish or oar fish *(Regalecus)*
Drawing by Olga Ley

Since a good number of the various species of whales sink when dead, there is no reason to deny this possibility for the unknown "sea serpent," too. There is no virtue in indulging in long speculations, however, until we know more.

The animal — or various species — can't remain a mystery forever. The oceans are becoming too well traveled and explored to let it — or them — stay out of sight indefinitely.

— WILLY LEY

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The Stars

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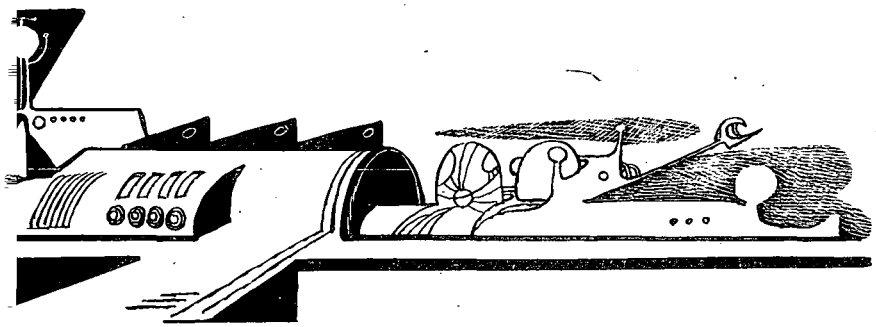
My Destination

By ALFRED BESTER

Conclusion of a 4-Part Serial

PyrE was power beyond Man's most fantastic dreams . . . but Gully Foyle's Burning Man was a fantastic dream within Man's power!

Illustrated by EMSH



SYNOPSIS

A driving passion for vengeance has transformed Gully Foyle from a brute spaceman into a clever, devastating engine of destruction. Marooned in space aboard the wreck of SS Nomad and left to die by a sister ship, the Vorga, which refused to rescue him, Foyle has spent eighteen months trying to track down the man who gave the order to abandon him.

Pursuing his revenge, Foyle has opposed the wealthy Presteign of Presteign, owner of the Nomad, who was determined to locate the wreck of his ship to recover Cr 20 millions in platinum which was in the purser's safe, along with 20 pounds of a mysterious substance called PyrE. Presteign has been aided by the formidable

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Saul Dagenham, chief of Dagenham Couriers, and Regis Sheffield, leading attorney of Terra.

With the aid of Jisbella McQueen, a clever and beautiful thief, Foyle was able to escape from Gouffre Martel, a cavern prison, beat Dagenham to the wreck of the Nomad and appropriate the fortune to finance his plan for revenge. Spending money lavishly, Foyle has taken on a new identity as Geoffrey Fourmyle of Ceres, a ludicrous playboy, and, with the unwilling help of Robin Wednesbury, a "telesend," has traced three leads to the identity of the commander aboard Vorga who gave the order to let him die.

In quick succession, Foyle has tracked down a Leading Spaceman, a Pharmacist's Mate and an Able Spaceman from the Vorga. Periodically in his search, Foyle is appalled by the ghastly, inexplicable appearance of a Burning Man, an image of himself with clothes on fire, the face glowing blood red with the scars of an old tattooing which has been removed. This tattooing Foyle received on the Sargasso Asteroid, a planetoid of 25th century savages, salvagers and looters in space. Foyle cannot understand the meaning of this Burning Man. He is not a fantasy because the Burning Man is seen by others as well as Foyle.

Foyle's three clues lead to a horrible discovery. The reason that SS Vorga did not pick him up in space was that Vorga was engaged in a cruel racket. War refugees from the Outer Satellites had been smuggled out to be transported to the Inner Planets for enormous fees. But Vorga had collected the money from the passengers and then scuttled them in space. Hundreds of helpless people had been murdered.

In the course of his search, Foyle, disguised as Fourmyle, mingles with society as well as the underworld. At a party in Presteign's home, Foyle successfully passes the scrutiny of Presteign and Saul Dagenham, and meets Jisbella McQueen again. Although Foyle had abandoned her when he salvaged the Nomad fortune, Jiz does not reveal his true identity. She has become Dagenham's mistress and wants Dagenham to have nothing to do with the PyrE which Foyle also possesses. She is in deadly terror of this mysterious substance for which Presteign and Army Central Intelligence, headed by Captain Peter Y'ang-Yeovil, are both desperately searching.

Foyle also meets Presteign's beautiful albino daughter, Olivia Presteign, and falls deeply in love with her. When he reveals this to Robin Wednesbury, Robin leaves him in a jealous rage and goes to

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Central Intelligence headquarters, where she reveals the truth about Foyle to Captain Y'ang-Yeovil. At almost the same moment, Saul Dagenham ferrets out the truth about Foyle from Jisbella McQueen, and Olivia Presteign unwittingly reveals the truth about Foyle to her father. Foyle has been betrayed by the three women in his life.

With Central Intelligence, Dagenham Couriers and Presteign of Presteign hunting him, Foyle finally locates the captain of SS Vorga on Mars in a freak colony for recluses. There, with the unexpected and startling aid of the Burning Man, Foyle makes the disastrous discovery that the person in command of Vorga, who ran the refugee racket and who gave the order to leave him to die, was Olivia Presteign, the woman he loves.

Foyle is so staggered by this information that he is nearly captured by the Mars Commando Brigade, which is pursuing him. Only a sneak atomic attack by the Outer Satellites in the war between the Outer Satellites and Inner Planets enables Foyle to escape. But he loses control of the spaceship that jets him up from the surface of Mars and goes driving out into space, as battered and helpless as he was a year and a half ago aboard the wreck of the Nomad.

14

FOYLE awoke in darkness. He was decelerated, but the exhaustion of his body told him he had been under acceleration while he was unconscious. Either his power pack had run out or . . .

He inched a hand to the small of his back. The pack was gone. It had been removed.

He explored with trembling fingers. He was in a bed. He listened to the murmur of ventilators and refrigerants and the click and buzz of servo-mechanisms. He was aboard a ship. He was strapped to the bed. The ship was in free fall.

Foyle unfastened himself, pressed his elbows against the mattress and floated up. He drifted through the darkness, searching for a light-switch or a call-button. His hands brushed against a water carafe with raised letters on the glass. He read them with his fingertips. SS, he felt. V O R G A. Vorga. He cried out.

The door of the stateroom opened. A figure drifted through the door, silhouetted against the light of a luxurious private lounge behind it.

"This time we did pick you up," a voice said.

"Olivia?"

"Yes."

"Then it's true?"

"Yes, Gully."

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Foyle began to cry.

"You're still weak," Olivia Presteign said gently. "Come and lie down."

She urged him into the lounge and strapped him into a chaise longue. It was still warm from her body. "You've been like this for six days. We never thought you'd live. Everything was drained out of you before the surgeon found that battery buried in your back."

"Where is it?" he croaked.

"You can have it whenever you want it. Don't fret, my dear."

He looked at her for a long moment, his Snow Maiden, his beloved Ice Princess—the white satin skin, the blind coral eyes and exquisite coral mouth. She touched his moist eyelids with a scented handkerchief.

"I love you," he said.

"Shh. I know, Gully."

"You've known all about me. For how long?"

"I knew Gully Foyle, the spaceman off the *Nomad*, was my enemy from the beginning. I never knew you were Fourmyle until we met. Ah, if only I'd known before. How much would have been saved."

"You knew and you've been laughing at me."

"No."

"Standing by and shaking with laughter."

"Standing by and loving you. No, don't interrupt. I'm trying to be rational and it's not easy."

A FLUSH cascaded across the marble face. "I'm not playing with you now. I—I betrayed you to my father. I did. Self-defense, I thought. Now that I've met him at last, I can see he's too dangerous. An hour later, I knew it was a mistake because I realized I was in love with you. I'm paying for it now. You need never have known."

"You expect me to believe that?"

"Then why am I here?" She trembled slightly. "Why did I follow you? That bombing was ghastly. You'd have been dead in another minute when we picked you up."

"Where are we now?"

"What difference does it make?"

"I'm stalling for time."

"Time for what?"

"Not for time. I'm stalling for courage."

"We're orbiting Earth."

"How did you follow me?"

"I knew you'd be after Lindsey Joyce. I took over one of my father's ships. It happened to be *Vorga* again."

"Does he know?"

"He never knows. I live my own private life."

He could not take his eyes off her and yet it hurt him to look at her. He was yearning and hating

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—yearning for the reality to be undone, hating the truth for what it was. He discovered that he was stroking her handkerchief with tremulous fingers.

"I love you, Olivia."

"I love you, Gully, my enemy."

"For God's sake!" he burst out. "Why did you do it? You were aboard *Vorga* running the reff racket. You gave the order to scuttle them. You gave the order to pass me by. Why? Why?!"

"What?" she lashed back. "Are you demanding apologies?"

"I'm demanding an explanation."

"You'll get none from me!"

"Blood and money, your father said. He was right. Bitch! Bitch! Bitch!"

"Blood and money, yes, and unashamed."

"I'm drowning, Olivia. Throw me a lifeline."

"Then drown. Nobody ever saved me. No — no, this is wrong, all wrong. Wait, my dear. Wait." She composed herself and began speaking very tenderly. "I could lie, Gully dear, and make you believe it, but I'm going to be honest. There's a simple explanation. I live my own private life. You do. We all do."

"What's yours?"

"No different from yours—from the rest of the world. I cheat, I lie, I destroy—like all of us. I'm criminal—like all of us."

"Why? For money? You don't need money."

"No."

"For control? Power?"

"Not for power."

"Then why?"

SHE took a deep breath, as though this truth was the first truth and was crucifying her. "To pay you back, all of you."

"For what?"

"For being blind," she said in a smoldering voice. "For being cheated. For being helpless. They should have killed me when I was born. Do you know what it's like to be blind—to receive life second-hand? To be dependent, begging, crippled? 'Bring them down to your level,' I told my secret life. 'If you're blind, make them blinder. If you're helpless, cripple them. Pay them back, all of them.'"

"Olivia, you're insane."

"And you?"

"I'm in love with a monster."

"We're a pair of monsters."

"No!"

"No? Not you?" she flared. "What have you been doing but paying the world back, like me? What's your revenge but settling your own private account with bad luck? Who wouldn't call you a crazy monster? We're a pair, Gully. We couldn't help falling in love."

He tried on the shroud of her

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revelation and it clung tighter than the tiger mask tattooed on his face.

"It's true," he said slowly. "I'm no better than you. Worse. But before God, I never murdered six hundred."

"You're murdering six million."

"What?"

"Perhaps more. You've got something they need to end the war and you're holding out."

"You mean PyrE?"

"Yes."

"What is it, this bringer of peace, this twenty pounds of miracle that they're fighting for?"

"I don't know, but I know they need it and I don't care. Yes, I'm being honest now. I don't care. Let millions be murdered. It makes no difference to us. Not to us, Gully, because we stand apart. We stand apart and shape our own world. We're the strong."

"We're the damned."

"We're the blessed. We've found each other." Suddenly she laughed and held out her arms. "I'm arguing when there's no need for words. Come to me, my love. Wherever you are, come to me..."

He touched her and then put his arms around her. He found her mouth and devoured her. But he was forced to release her.

"What is it, Gully darling?"

"I'm not a child any more," he said wearily. "I've learned to understand there's never a simple answer. You can love and loathe someone."

"Can you, Gully?"

"And you're making me loathe myself."

"No, my dear."

"I've been a tiger all my life. I trained myself — educated myself — pulled myself up by my stripes to make me a stronger tiger with a longer claw and a sharper tooth — quick and deadly."

"And you are. You are. The deadliest."

HE SHOOK his head. "I'm not. I went too far. I went beyond simplicity. I turned myself into a thinking creature. I look through your blind eyes, my love whom I loathe, and I see myself. The tiger's gone."

"There's no place for the tiger to go. You're trapped, Gully — by Dagenham, Intelligence, my father, the world."

"I know."

"But you're safe with me. We're safe together, the pair of us. They'll never dream of looking for you near me. We can plan together, fight together, destroy them together . . ."

"No. Not together."

"What is it?" she flared again. "Are you still hunting me? Is that what's wrong? Do you still want revenge? Then take it. Go ahead, destroy me."

"No. Destruction's finished for

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me. I couldn't hurt you."

"Ah, I know what it is." She became tender again in an instant. "It's your face, poor darling. You're ashamed of your tiger face. But I love it. You burn so brightly for me. You burn through the blindness. Believe me . . ."

"My God! What a pair of hideous freaks we are."

"What's happened to you?" She broke away from him, her coral eyes glittering. "Where's the man who watched the raid with me? Where's the unashamed savage who —"

"Gone, Olivia."

"Gully!"

"He's lost."

"But why? What have I done?" She reached out, touched him and then clung to him. "Listen to me, darling. You're exhausted. That's all. Nothing is lost." The words tumbled out of her. "You're right. Of course you're right. We've been bad, both of us. Loathsome. But all that's gone now. Nothing is lost. We were wicked because we were alone and unhappy. But we've found each other; we can save each other. Be my love, darling. Always. Forever. I've looked for you so long, waited and hoped and prayed . . ."

"You're lying, Olivia, and you know it."

"For God's sake, Gully!"

"Put *Vorga* down, Olivia."

"Land?"

"Yes."

"On Earth?"

"Yes."

"They're hunting you — waiting for you — watching. What are you going to do?"

"Do you think this is easy for me?" he said. "I'm doing what I have to do. I'm still driven. No man ever escapes from that. But there's a different compulsion in the saddle and the spurs hurt, damn it. They hurt like hell."

He stifled his anger and controlled himself. He took her hands and kissed her palms.

"It's all finished, Olivia," he said gently. "But I love you. Always. Forever."

"I'LL sum it up," Dagenham rapped. "We were bombed the night we found Foyle. We lost him on the Moon and found him a week later on Mars. We were bombed again. We lost him again. He's been lost for a week. Another bombing's due. Which one of the Inner Planets? Venus? The Moon? Terra again? Who knows? But we all know this — one more raid without retaliation and we're lost."

He glanced around the table. Against the ivory and gold background of the Star Chamber of Castle Presteign, his face, all three faces, looked strained. Captain Y'ang-Yeovil slitted his eyes in a frown. Presteign compressed

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his thin lips still more tightly.

"And we know this, too," Dagenham continued. "We can't retaliate without PyrE and we can't locate the PyrE without Foyle."

"My instructions were," said Presteign, "that PyrE was not to be mentioned in public."

"In the first place, this is not public," Dagenham snapped. "It's a private information pool. In the second place, we've gone beyond property rights. We're discussing survival and we've all got equal rights in that. Yes, Jiz?"

Jisbella McQueen had jaunted into the Star Chamber, looking intent and furious.

"No sign of Foyle," she said.

"Old St. Pat's still being watched?"

"Yes."

"Commando Brigade's report in from Mars yet?"

"No."

"That's my business and Most Secret," Y'ang-Yeovil objected mildly.

"You've got as few secrets from me as I have from you." Dagenham grinned mirthlessly. "See if you can beat Central Intelligence back here with that report, Jiz."

She disappeared.

"About property rights," Captain Y'ang-Yeovil murmured. "May I suggest to Presteign that Central Intelligence will guarantee full payment to him for his right, title and interest in PyrE?"

"Don't coddle him, Yeovil."

"This conference is being recorded," Presteign said coldly. "The captain's offer is now on file." He turned his basilisk face to Dagenham. "You are in my employ, Mr. Dagenham. Please control your references to myself."

"And to your property?" Dagenham inquired with a deadly smile. "The Solar System's on the edge of total annihilation for the sake of your property. I'm not exaggerating. It will be a shooting war to end all wars if we can't stop it."

"We can always surrender," Presteign answered.

"No," Y'ang-Yeovil said. "That's already been discussed and discarded at HQ. We know the post-victory plans of the Outer Satellites. They involve total exploitation of the Inner Planets. We're to be gutted and worked until nothing's left. Surrender would be as disastrous as defeat."

"But not for Presteign," Dagenham corrected.

"Shall we say—present company excluded?" Y'ang-Yeovil replied gracefully.

DAGENHAM swiveled in his chair. "All right, Presteign. Give."

"I beg your pardon, sir?"

"Let's hear all about PyrE. I've got an idea how we can bring

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Foyle out into the open and locate the stuff, but I've got to know all about it first. Make your contribution."

"No," Presteign answered.

"No, what?"

"I have decided to withdraw from this information pool. I will reveal nothing about PyrE."

"Presteign! Are you mad? Are you fighting Regis Sheffield's Liberal Party again?"

"It's quite simple, Dagenham," Y'ang-Yeovil interposed. "My information about the surrender-defeat situation has shown Presteign a way to better his position. No doubt he intends negotiating a sale to the enemy in return for property advantages."

"Can nothing move you?" Dagenham asked Presteign scornfully. "Can nothing touch you? Are you all property and nothing else? Go away, Jiz! The whole thing's fallen apart."

Jisbella had jaunted into the Star Chamber again. "Commando Brigade's reported. We know what happened to Foyle."

"What?"

"Presteign's got him."

"What!" Both Dagenham and Y'ang-Yeovil started to their feet.

"He left Mars in a private yawl, was shot up and was observed being rescued by the Presteign SS *Vorga*."

"Damn you, Presteign," Dagenham snapped. "So that's why you've been so unconcerned—"

"Wait," Y'ang-Yeovil commanded. "It's news to him, too, Dagenham. Look at him."

Presteign's handsome face had gone the color of ashes. He tried to rise and fell back stiffly in his chair. "Olivia," he whispered. "With him. That scum . . ."

"Presteign?"

"My daughter, gentlemen, has —for some time been engaged in —certain activities. The family vice. Blood and— I have managed to close my eyes to it—had almost convinced myself that I was mistaken. I—But Foyle! Dirt! Filth! He must be destroyed!" Presteign's voice soared alarmingly. His head twisted back like a hanged man's and his body began to shudder.

"What in the—"

"Epilepsy," Y'ang-Yeovil said. He pulled Presteign out of the chair onto the floor. "A spoon, Miss McQueen. Hurry!" He levered Presteign's teeth open and placed a spoon between them to protect the tongue. As fast as it had begun, the seizure was over. The shuddering stopped. Presteign opened his eyes.

"*Petit mal*," Y'ang-Yeovil murmured, withdrawing the spoon. "But he'll be dazed for a while."

SUDDENLY Presteign began speaking in a low monotone. "PyrE is a pyrophoric alloy. A

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pyrophore is a metal which emits sparks when scraped or struck. PyrE emits energy, which is why E, the energy symbol, was added to the prefix Pyr. PyrE is a solid solution of trans-Plutonian isotopes, releasing thermo-nuclear energy on the order of stellar Phoenix Action. Its discoverer was of the opinion that he had produced the equivalent of the primordial proto-matter which exploded into the Universe."

"My God!" Jisbella exclaimed.

Dagenham silenced her with a gesture and bent over Presteign. "How is it brought to critical mass, Presteign? How is the energy released?"

"As the original energy was generated in the beginning of time," Presteign droned. "Through Will and Idea."

"I'm convinced he's a Cellar-Christian," Dagenham muttered to Y'ang-Yeovil. He raised his voice. "Will you explain, Presteign?"

"Through Will and Idea," Presteign repeated. "PyrE can only be exploded by psychokinesis. Its energy can only be released by thought."

"There's no key? No formula?"

"No. Only Will and Idea are necessary." The glazed eyes closed.

Dagenham mopped his brow. "Will this give the Outer Satellites pause, Yeovil?"

"It'll give us all pause."

"It's the road to hell," Jisbella said.

"Then let's find it and get off the road. Here's my idea, Yeovil. Foyle was tinkering with that hell-brew in his lab in Old St. Pat's, trying to analyze it."

"I told you that in strict confidence," Jisbella said furiously.

"I'm sorry, dear. We're past honor and the decencies. Now look, Yeovil, there must be some fragments of the stuff lying about — as dust, in solution, in precipitates. We've got to detonate those fragments and blow hell out of Foyle's circus."

"Why?"

"To bring him running. He must have the bulk of the PyrE hidden there somewhere. He'll come to salvage it."

"What if it blows up, too?"

"It can't — not inside an Inert Lead Isotope safe."

"Maybe it's not all inside."

"Jiz says it is. At least, so Foyle reported."

"Leave me out of this," Jisbella said.

"Anyway, we'll have to gamble."

"Gamble!" Y'ang-Yeovil exclaimed. "On a Phoenix Action? You'll gamble the Solar System into a brand-new nova."

"What else can we do? Pick any other road; it's also the road to destruction. Have we got any choice?"

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"We can wait," Jisbella said.

"For what? For Foyle to blow us up himself with his tinkering?"

"We can warn him."

"We don't know where he is."

"We can find him."

"How soon? Won't that be a gamble, too? And what about that stuff lying around waiting for someone to think it into energy? Suppose a Jack-jaunter gets in and cracks the safe, looking for goodies? And then we don't just have dust waiting for an accidental thought. We have twenty pounds."

JISBELLA turned pale. Dagenham turned on the Intelligence man. "You make the decision, Yeovil. Do we try it my way or do we wait?"

Y'ang-Yeovil sighed. "Damn all scientists. I'll have to make my decision for a reason you don't know, Dagenham. The Outer Satellites are also onto this. We've got reason to believe that they have agents looking for Foyle. If we wait, they may pick him up before we do. In fact, they may have him now."

"So your decision is . . . ?"

"The blowup. Let's bring Foyle running if we can."

"No!" Jisbella cried.

"How?" Dagenham asked, ignoring her.

"Oh, I've got just the one for the job. A one-way telepath named Robin Wednesbury."

"When?"

"At once. We'll clear the entire neighborhood. We'll get full news coverage and do a complete broadcast. If Foyle's anywhere in the Inner Planets, he'll hear about it."

"Not *about* it," Jisbella said in despair. "He'll *hear* it. It'll be the last thing any of us hear."

"Will and Idea," Presteign whispered.

* * *

As always, when he returned from a stormy civil court session in Leningrad, Regis Sheffield was pleased and complacent, rather like a cocky prizefighter who's won a tough fight. He stopped off at Blekmann's in Berlin for a drink and some war-talk, had a second and more war-talk in a legal hangout on the Quai Dorsay, and a third session in the Skin & Bones opposite Temple Bar. By the time he arrived in his New York office, he was pleasantly illuminated.

As he strode through the clattering corridors and outer rooms, he was greeted by his secretary with a handful of memo beads.

"Knocked Djargo-Dantchenko for a loop," Sheffield reported triumphantly. "Judgment and full damages. Old DD's sore as a boil. This makes the score eleven to five, my favor." He took the beads, juggled them and then be-

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gan tossing them into unlikely receptacles all over the office, including the open mouth of a gaping clerk.

"Really, Mr. Sheffield! Have you been drinking?"

"No more work today. The war news is too damned gloomy. Have to do something to stay cheerful. What say we brawl in the streets?"

"Mr. Sheffield!"

"Anything waiting for me that can't wait another day?"

"There's a gentleman in your office."

"He made you let him get that far?" Sheffield looked impressed. "Who is he? God or somebody?"

"He won't give his name. He gave me this."

THE secretary handed Sheffield a sealed envelope. On it was scrawled URGENT. Sheffield tore it open, his blunt features crinkling with curiosity. Then his eyes widened. Inside the envelope were two Cr 50,00 notes. Sheffield turned without a word and burst into his private office. Foyle arose from his chair.

"These are genuine," Sheffield blurted.

"To the best of my knowledge."

"Exactly twenty of these notes were minted last year. All are on deposit in Terran treasuries. How did you get hold of these two?"

"You're Mr. Sheffield?"

"Who else? How did you get hold of these notes?"

"Bribery."

"Why?"

"I thought at the time that it might be convenient to have them available."

"For what? More bribery?"

"If legal fees are bribery."

"I set my own fees," Sheffield said. He tossed the notes back to Foyle. "You can produce them again *if* I decide to take your case and *if* I decide I've been worth that to you. What's your problem?"

"Criminal."

"Don't be too specific yet. And?"

"I want to give myself up."

"To the police?"

"Yes."

"For what crime?"

"Crimes."

"Name two."

"Robbery and rape."

"Name two more."

"Blackmail and murder."

"Any other items?"

"Treason and genocide."

"Does that exhaust your catalogue?"

"I think so, but we may be able to unveil a few more when we get specific."

"Been busy, haven't you? Either you're the Prince of Villains or insane."

"I've been both, Mr. Sheffield."

"Why do you want to give

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yourself up?" Sheffield asked.

"I've come to my senses," Foyle answered bitterly.

"I don't mean that. A criminal never surrenders while he's ahead. You're obviously ahead. What's the reason?"

"The most damnable thing that ever happened to a man. I picked up a rare disease called conscience."

Sheffield snorted. "That can turn fatal."

"It is fatal. I've realized that I've been behaving like an animal."

"And now you want to purge yourself?"

"No, it isn't that simple," Foyle said grimly. "That's why I've come to you—for major surgery. The man who upsets the morphology of society is a cancer. The man who gives his own decisions priority over society is a criminal. But there are chain reactions. Purging yourself with punishment isn't enough. Everything's got to be set right. I wish to God everything could be cured just by sending me back to Gouffre Martel or shooting me . . ."

"*Back* to Gouffre Martel?" Sheffield cut in keenly.

"Shall I be specific?"

"Not yet. Go on. You sound as though you've got ethical growing pains."

"That's it exactly." Foyle paced in agitation, crumpling the banknotes with nervous fingers. "This is one hell of a mess, Sheffield. There's a girl that's got to pay for a vicious, rotten crime. The fact that I love her— No, never mind that. She's a cancer that's got to be cut out—like me. Which means I'll have to add informing to my catalogue. The fact that I'm giving myself up, too, doesn't make any difference."

"What *is* all this mishmash?"

FOYLE turned on Sheffield. "One of the New Year's bombs has just walked into your office and it's saying: 'Put it all right. Put me together again and send me home. Put together the city I flattened and the people I shattered.' That's what I want to hire you for. I don't know how most criminals feel, but—"

"Sensible, matter-of-fact, like good businessmen who've had bad luck," Sheffield answered promptly. "That's the usual attitude of the professional criminal. It's obvious you're an amateur, if you're a criminal at all. My dear sir, do be sensible. You come here, extravagantly accusing yourself of robbery, rape, murder, genocide, treason, and God knows what else. Do you expect me to take you seriously?"

Bunny, Sheffield's assistant, jaunted into the private office. "Chief!" he shouted in excitement. "Something new's turned

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up. A lech-jaunte. Two society kids bribed a C-class tart to— Oop. Sorry. Didn't realize you had—" Bunny broke off and stared. "Fourmyle!"

"What? Who?" Sheffield demanded.

"Don't you know him, Chief?" Bunny stammered. "That's Fourmyle of Ceres. Gully Foyle."

More than a year ago, Regis Sheffield had been hypnotically fulminated and triggered for this moment. His body had been prepared to respond without thought and the response was lightning. He struck Foyle in half a second — temple, throat and groin. It had been decided not to depend on weapons, since none might be available.

Foyle fell. Sheffield turned on Bunny and battered him back across the office. Then he spat into his palm. It had been decided not to depend on drugs, since drugs might not be available. Sheffield's salivary glands had been prepared to respond with an anaphylaxis secretion to the stimulus. He ripped open Foyle's sleeve and dug a nail deep into the hollow of Foyle's elbow.

A strange cry was torn from Foyle's lips; the tattooing showed livid on his face. Before the stunned law assistant could make a move, Sheffield swung Foyle up to his shoulder and jaunted.

He arrived in the middle of the Four Mile Circus in Old St. Pat's. It was a daring but calculated move. This was the last place he would be expected to go and the first place where he might expect to locate the PyrE. He was prepared to deal with anyone he might meet in the Cathedral, but the interior of the Circus was empty.

The vacant tents ballooning up in the nave looked tattered; they had already been looted. Sheffield plunged into the first he saw. It was Fourmyle's traveling library, filled with hundreds of books and thousands of glittering novel beads. The Jack-jaunters were not interested in literature.

Sheffield threw Foyle down on the floor. Only then did he take a gun from his pocket.

Foyle's eyelids fluttered; his eyes opened.

"You're drugged," Sheffield said rapidly. "Don't try to jaunte. And don't move. I'm warning you, I'm ready for anything."

DAZEDLY, Foyle tried to rise. Sheffield instantly fired and seared his shoulder. Foyle was slammed back against the stone flooring. He was numbed and bewildered. There was a roaring in his ears and a poison coursing through his blood.

"I'm warning you," Sheffield repeated, "I'm ready for anything."

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"What do you want?" Foyle whispered.

"Two things. Twenty pounds of PyrE and you. You most of all."

"You damned maniac! I came into your office to give it up—hand it over."

"To the O.S.?"

"To the what?"

"The Outer Satellites. Shall I spell it for you?"

"No," Foyle muttered. "The patriot, Sheffield, an O.S. agent. I should have known. I'm a fool."

"You're the most valuable fool in the Solar System, Foyle. We want you even more than the PyrE. That's an unknown to us, but we know what you are."

"What are you talking about?"

"You *don't* know, do you? You *still* don't know. You haven't an inkling."

"Of what?"

"Listen to me," Sheffield said. "I'm taking you back two years to *Nomad*. Understand? Back to the death of the *Nomad*. One of our raiders finished her off and they found you aboard the wreck. The last man alive."

"So an O.S. ship did blast *Nomad?*"

"Yes. You don't remember?"

"I don't remember anything about that. I never could."

"I'm telling you why. The raider got a clever idea. They'd turn you into a decoy—a sitting duck, understand? You were half dead, but they took you aboard and patched you up. They put you into a spacesuit and cast you adrift with your micro-wave on. You were broadcasting distress signals and mumbling for help on every wave-band. The idea was that they'd lurk nearby and pick off the I. P. ships that came to rescue you."

Foyle began to laugh. "I'm getting up," he said recklessly. "Shoot again, you son of a bitch, but I'm getting up." He struggled to his feet, clutching his shoulder. "So *Vorga* shouldn't have picked me up anyway. I was a decoy. Nobody should have come near me. I was a shill, a lure, death-bait. Isn't that the final irony? *Nomad* didn't have any right to be rescued in the first place. I didn't have any right to revenge."

"You still don't understand," Sheffield pounded. "They were nowhere near *Nomad* when they set you adrift. They were six hundred thousand miles from *Nomad.*"

"Six hundred thous—"

"*Nomad* was too far out of the shipping lanes. They wanted you where ships would pass. They took you six hundred thousand miles sunward. They put you through the airlock and backed off, watching you drift. Your suit-lights were blinking and you were moaning for help on the micro-wave. Then you disappeared."

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"Disappeared?"

"You were gone. No more lights, no more broadcast. They came back to check. You were gone without a trace. And the next thing we learned—you got back aboard *Nomad*."

"Impossible!"

"Man, you space-jaunted!" Sheffield said savagely. "You were patched and delirious, but you space-jaunted. You space-jaunted six hundred thousand miles through the void back to the wreck of the *Nomad*. You did something that's never been done before. God knows how. You don't even know yourself. But we're going to find out. I'm taking you to the Satellites with me and we'll get that secret out of you if we have to tear it out."

He took Foyle's throat in his powerful hand and hefted the gun in the other. "But first I want the PyrE. You'll produce it, Foyle. Don't think you won't." He lashed Foyle across the forehead with the gun. "I'll do anything to get it. Don't think I won't." He smashed Foyle again, coldly, efficiently. "If you're looking for a purge, man, you've found it!"

BUNNY leaped off the public jaunte stage at Five-Points and streaked into the main entrance of Central Intelligence's New York Office like a frightened rabbit. He shot past the outermost guard cordon, through the protective labyrinth and into the inner offices. He acquired a train of excited pursuers and found himself face to face with the more seasoned guards who had calmly jaunted to positions ahead of him and were waiting.

Bunny began to shout: "Yeovil! Yeovil!"

Still running, he dodged around desks, kicked over chairs, and created an incredible uproar. He continued his yelling: "Yeovil! Yeovil! Yeovil!" Just before they were about to put him out of his misery, Y'ang-Yeovil appeared.

"What's all this? I gave orders that Miss Wednesbury was to have absolute quiet."

"Yeovil!" Bunny shouted.

"Who's that?"

"Sheffield's assistant."

"What? Bunny?"

"Foyle!" Bunny howled. "Gully Foyle."

Y'ang-Yeovil covered the fifty feet between them in exactly one-point-six-six seconds. "What about Foyle?"

"Sheffield's got him," Bunny gasped.

"Sheffield? When?"

"Half an hour ago."

"Why didn't he bring him here?"

"He abducted him. I think Sheffield's an O.S. agent . . ."

"Why didn't you come at once?"

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"Sheffield jaunted with Foyle. Knocked him stiff and disappeared. I went looking. All over. Took a chance. Must have made fifty jauntes in twenty minutes..."

"Amateur!" Y'ang-Yeovil exclaimed in exasperation. "Why didn't you leave that to the pros?"

"Found Sheffield and Foyle."

"You found them? Where?"

"Old St. Pat's. Sheffield's after the —"

But Y'ang-Yeovil had turned on his heel and was tearing back up the corridor, shouting: "Robin! Robin! Stop!"

And then their ears were bruised by the bellow of thunder.

15

LIKE widening rings in a pond, the Will and the Idea spread, searching out, touching and tripping the delicate sub-atomic trigger of PyrE. The thought found particles, dust, smoke, vapor, motes, molecules. The Will and the Idea transformed them all.

In Sicily, where Dott. Franco Torre had worked for an exhausting month attempting to unlock the secret of one slug of PyrE, the residues and the precipitates had been dumped down a drain which led to the sea. For many months, the Mediterranean currents had drifted these residues across the sea-bottom. In an instant, a hump-backed mound of water towering fifty feet high traced the courses, northeast to Sardinia and southwest to Tripoli. A micro-second later, the surface of the Mediterranean was raised into the twisted casting of a giant earthworm that wound around the islands of Pantelleria, Lampedusa, Linosa and Malta.

Some of the residues had been burned off, had gone up the chimney with smoke and vapor to drift for hundreds of miles before settling. These minute particles showed where they had finally settled in Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Greece with blinding pinpoint explosions of incredible minuteness and intensity. And some motes, still drifting in the stratosphere, revealed their presence with brilliant gleams like daylight stars.

In Texas, where Prof. John Mantley had had the same baffling experience with PyrE, most of the residues had gone down the shaft of an exhausted oil well which was also used to accommodate radioactive wastes. A deep water table had absorbed much of the matter and spread it slowly over an area of some ten square miles. Ten square miles of Texas flats shook themselves into corduroy. A vast untapped deposit of natural gas at last found a vent and came shrieking up to the surface where sparks from flying stones ignited it into a roaring

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conical torch, two hundred feet high.

A milligram of PyrE deposited on a disk of filter paper, long since discarded, forgotten, rounded up in a wastepaper drive and at last pulped into a mold for type-metal, destroyed the entire late night edition of the *Glasgow Observer*.

A small fragment of PyrE spattered on a lab smock, long since converted into rag paper, destroyed a thank you note written by Lady Shrapnel, and destroyed an additional ton of first class mail in the process.

A shirt cuff, inadvertently dipped into an acid solution of PyrE, abandoned along with the shirt and now worn under his mink suit by a Jack-jaunter, blasted off the wrist and hand of the Jack-jaunter in one fiery amputation.

A decimilligram of PyrE, still adhering to a former evaporation crystal now in use as an ashtray, kindled a fire that scorched the office of one Baker, dealer in freaks and purveyor of natural and surgical monsters.

ACROSS the length and breadth of the planet were isolated explosions, chains of explosions, traceries of fire, pinpoints of fire, meteor flares in the sky, great craters and narrow channels plowed in the Earth, exploded in the Earth, vomited forth from the Earth.

In Old St. Pat's, nearly a tenth of a gram of PyrE was exposed in Fourmyle's laboratory. The rest was sealed in its Inert Lead Isomer safe, protected from accidental and intentional psychokinetic ignition. The blinding blast of energy generated from that tenth of a gram blew out the walls and split the floors as though an internal earthquake had convulsed the building.

The buttresses held the pillars for a split-second and then crumbled. Down came towers, spires, pillars, buttresses and roof in a thundering avalanche to hesitate above the yawning crater of the floor in a tangled, precarious equilibrium. A breath of wind, a distant vibration, and the collapse would continue until the crater was filled solid with pulverized rubble.

The starlike heat of the explosion ignited a hundred fires and melted the ancient thick copper of the collapsed roof. If a milligram more of PyrE had been exposed to detonation, the heat would have been intense enough to vaporize the metal immediately. Instead, it glowed white and began to flow. It streamed off the wreckage of the crumbled roof and began searching its way downward through the jumbled stone, iron, wood and glass, like

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some monstrous molten mold creeping through a tangled web.

Dagenham and Y'ang-Yeovil arrived almost simultaneously. A moment later, Robin Wednesbury appeared and then Jisbella McQueen. A dozen Intelligence operatives and six Dagenham couriers arrived along with Presteign's Jaunte Watch and the police. They formed a cordon around the blazing block, but there were very few spectators. After the shock of the New Year's Eve raid, that single explosion had frightened half New York into another wild jaunte for safety.

The uproar of the fire was frightful and the massive grind of tons of wreckage in uneasy balance was ominous. Everyone was forced to shout and yet was fearful of the vibrations. Y'ang-Yeovil bawled the news about Foyle and Sheffield into Dagenham's ear. Dagenham nodded and displayed his deadly smile.

"We'll have to go in," he shouted.

"Fire suits," Y'ang-Yeovil yelled back.

He disappeared and reappeared with a pair of white Disaster Crew fire suits. At the sight of these, Robin and Jisbella began shouting hysterical objections. The two men ignored them, wriggled into the Inert Isomer armor and inched into the inferno.

WITHIN Old St. Pat's, it was as though a monstrous hand had churned a log-jam of wood, stone and metal. Through every interstice crawled tongues of molten copper, igniting wood, crumbling stone, shattering glass. Where the copper flowed, it merely glowed, but where it poured, it spattered dazzling droplets of white hot metal.

Beneath the log-jam yawned a black crater where formerly the floor of the cathedral had been. The explosion had split the flagstone, revealing the cellars, subcellars and vaults deep below the building. These, too, were filled with a snarl of stones, beams, pipes, wire, the remnants of the Four Mile circus tents; all fitfully lit small fires. Then the first of the copper dripped down into the crater and illuminated it with a brilliant molten splash.

Dagenham pounded Y'ang-Yeovil's shoulder to attract his attention and pointed. Halfway down the crater, in the midst of the tangle, lay the body of Regis Sheffield, drawn and quartered by the explosion. Y'ang-Yeovil pounded Dagenham's shoulder and pointed. Almost at the bottom of the crater lay Gully Foyle, and as the blazing spatter illuminated him, they saw him move. The two men at once turned and crawled out of the cathedral for a conference.

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"He's alive."

"How's it possible?"

"I can guess. Did you see the shreds of tent wadded near him? It must have been a freak explosion up at the other end of the cathedral and the tents in between cushioned Foyle. Then he dropped through the floor before anything else had a chance to hit him."

"Luckily for us. We've got to get him out. He's the only man who knows where the PyrE is located."

"Could it still be here — unexploded?"

"If it's in the ILI safe, yes. How are we going to get him out?"

"Well, we can't work down from above."

"Why not?"

"One false step and the whole mess will collapse."

"Did you see that copper flowing down?"

"God, yes!"

"Well, if we don't get him out in ten minutes, he'll be at the bottom of a pool of molten copper."

"What can we do?"

"I've got a long-shot."

"What?"

"The cellars of the old R.C.A. buildings across the street are as deep as St. Pat's."

"And?"

"We'll go down and try to hole through. Maybe we can pull Foyle out from the bottom."

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A SQUAD broke into the ancient R.C.A. buildings, abandoned and sealed up for two generations. They went down into the cellar arcades, crumbling museums of the retail stores of centuries past. They located the old elevator shafts and dropped through them into the sub-cellars filled with electric installations, heat plants and refrigeration systems. They went down into the sump cellars, waist-deep in water from the streams of prehistoric Manhattan Island, streams that still flowed beneath the streets that covered them.

As they waded through the sump cellars, bearing east-northeast to bring up opposite the St. Pat's vaults, they suddenly discovered that the pitch-dark was lighted by a fiery flickering up ahead. Dagenham shouted and flung himself forward. The explosion that had opened the sub-cellars of St. Pat's had split the septum between its vaults and those of the R.C.A. buildings. Through a jagged rent in stone and soil, they could peer into the bottom of the inferno.

Fifty feet inside was Foyle, trapped in a labyrinth of twisted beams, stones, pipe, metal and wire. He was illuminated by a roaring glow from above him and fitful flames around him. His clothes were on fire and the tattooing was livid on his face. He moved feebly, like a bewildered animal in a maze.

"My God!" Y'ang-Yeovil exclaimed. "The Burning Man!"

"What?"

"The horror I saw on the Spanish Stairs. Never mind that now. What can we do?"

"Go in, of course."

A brilliant white gob of copper suddenly oozed down close to Foyle and splashed ten feet below him. It was followed by a second, a third, a slow, steady stream. A pool began to form. Dagenham and Y'ang-Yeovil sealed the faceplates of their armor and crawled through the break in the septum. After three minutes of agonized struggling, they realized that they could not get through the labyrinth to Foyle. It was locked to the outside, but not from the inside. Dagenham and Y'ang-Yeovil backed up to confer.

"We can't get to him," Dagenham shouted, "but he can get out."

"How? He can't jaunte, obviously, or he wouldn't be here."

"No, he can climb. Look. He goes left, then up, reverses, makes a turn along that beam, slides under it and pushes through that tangle of wire. The wire can't be pushed in, which is why we can't get to him, but it *can* push out, which is how he can get out. It's a one-way door."

The pool of molten copper

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crept up toward Foyle.

"If he doesn't get out soon, he'll be roasted alive."

"We'll have to talk him out—tell him what to do."

The men began shouting: "Foyle! Foyle! Foyle!"

THE burning man in the maze continued to move feebly. The downpour of sizzling copper increased.

"Foyle! Turn left. Can you hear me? Foyle! Turn left and climb up. You can get out if you'll listen to me. Turn left and climb up. Then— Foyle!"

"He's not listening. Foyle! Gully Foyle! Can you hear us?"

"Send for Jiz. Maybe he'll listen to her."

"No, get Robin. She'll telesend. He'll have to listen."

"But will she do it? Save *him* of all people?"

"She'll have to. This is bigger than hatred. It's the biggest damned thing the world's ever encountered. I'll get her." Y'ang-Yeovil started to crawl out.

Dagenham stopped him. "Wait, Yeo. Look at him. He's flickering."

"Flickering?"

"Look! He's—blinking like a glowworm. Watch! Now you see him and now you don't."

The figure of Foyle was appearing, disappearing and reappearing in rapid succession, like a firefly caught in a flaming net.

"What's he doing now? What's he trying to do? What's happening?"

* * *

He was trying to escape. Like some seabird caught in the blazing brazier of a naked beacon fire, he was beating about in a frenzy—a blackened, burning creature, dashing himself against the unknown.

Sound came as sight to him, as light in strange patterns. He saw the sound of his shouted name in vivid rhythms:

FOYLE FOYLE FOYLE

FOYLE FOYLE FOYLE

FOYLE FOYLE FOYLE

Motion came as sound to him. He heard the writhing of the flames; he heard the swirls of smoke; he heard the flickering, jeering shadows . . . all speaking deafeningly in strange tongues:

"BURUU GYARR?" the steam asked.

"Asha. Asha, rit-kit-dit-zit m'gid," the quick shadows answered.

"Ohhh. Ahhh. Heee," the heat ripples clamored.

Even the flames on his own clothes roared gibberish in his ears. "MANTERGEISTMANN!" they bellowed.

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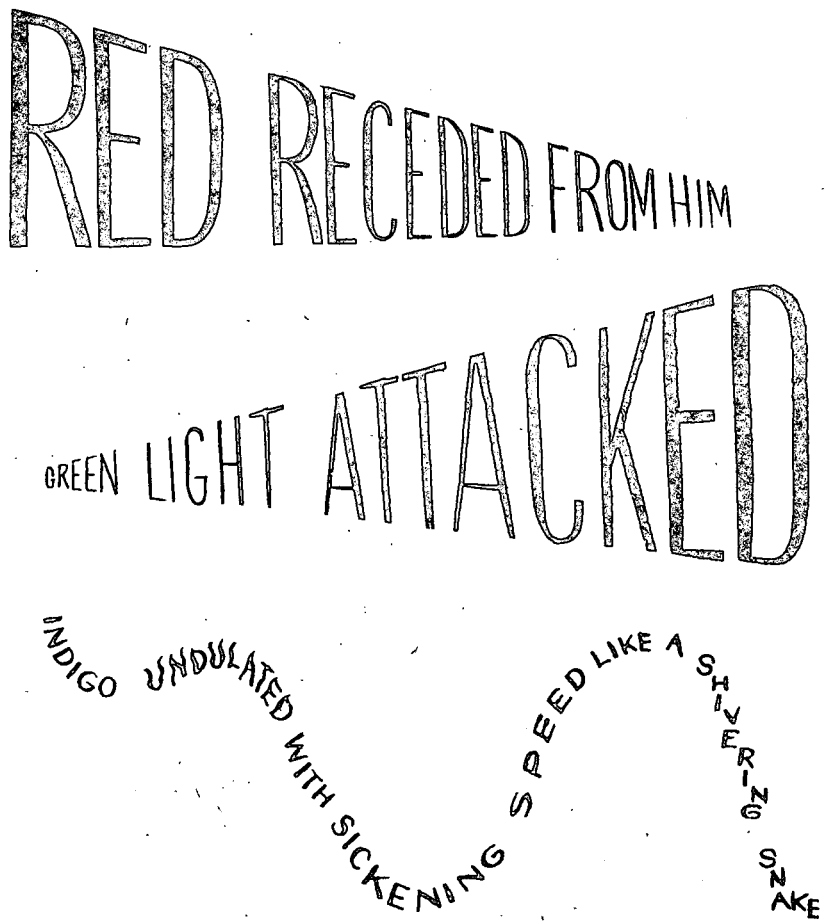
Color was pain to him . . . heat, cold, pressure; sensations of intolerable heights and plunging depths, of tremendous accelerations and crushing compressions:



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Touch was taste to him . . . the feel of wood was acrid and chalky in his mouth, metal was salt, stone tasted sour-sweet to the touch of his fingers, and the feel of glass cloyed his palate like over-rich pastry.

SMELL was touch . . . hot stone smelled like velvet caressing his cheek.

Smoke and ash were harsh tweeds rasping his skin, almost the feel of wet canvas. Molten metal smelled like blows hammering his heart, and the ionization of the PyrE explosion filled the air with ozone that smelled like water trickling ticklingly through his fingers.

He was not blind, not deaf, not senseless. Sensation came to him, but filtered through a nervous system twisted and short-circuited by the shock of the PyrE concussion.

He was suffering from synesthesia, that rare condition in which perception receives messages from the objective world and relays these messages to the brain, but there in the brain the sensory perceptions are confused with one another. So, in Foyle, sound registered as sight, motion registered as sound, colors became pain sensations, touch became taste, and smell became touch.

He was not only trapped within the labyrinth of the inferno under Old St. Pat's; he was trapped in the kaleidoscope of his own cross-senses.

Again desperate, on the ghastly verge of extinction, he abandoned all disciplines and habits of living; or, perhaps, they were stripped from him. He reverted from a conditioned product of environment and experience to an inchoate creature craving escape and survival and exercising every power it possessed. And again the miracle of two years ago took place. The undivided energy of an entire human organism, of every cell, fiber, nerve and muscle empowered that craving, and again Foyle space-jaunted.

He went hurtling along the geodesical space-lines of the curving universe at the speed of thought, far exceeding that of light.

His spatial velocity was so frightful that his time-axis was twisted from the vertical line drawn from the Past through Now to the Future. He went flickering along the new near-horizontal axis, this new space-time geodesic, driven by the miracle of a human mind no longer inhibited by gravity-bound concepts of the impossible.

Again he achieved what Helmut Grant and Enzio Dandridge and scores of other experimenters had failed to do, because his blind

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panic forced him to abandon the spatio-temporal inhibitions that had defeated previous attempts. He did not jaunte to Elsewhere, but to Elsewhen.

But most important, the fourth-dimensional awareness, the complete picture of the Arrow of Time and his position on it which is born in every man, but deeply submerged by the trivia of living, was in Foyle close to the surface. He jaunted along the space-time geodesics to Elsewheres and Elsewhens, translating "i," the square root of minus one, from an imaginary number into reality by an unreasoning act of blind imagination.

He jaunted.

He jaunted back through time to his past. He became the Burning Man who had inspired himself with terror and perplexity on the beach in Australia, in a quack's office in Shanghai, on the Spanish Stairs in Rome, on the Moon, in the Skoptsy Colony on Mars. He jaunted back through time, revisiting the savage battles that he himself had fought in Gully Foyle's tiger hunt for vengeance. His flaming appearances were sometimes noted, other times not.

He jaunted.

HE WAS aboard *Nomad*, drifting in the empty frost of space.

He stood in the door to nowhere.

The cold was the taste of lemons and the vacuum was a rake of talons on his skin. The Sun and the stars were a shaking ague that racked his bones.

"GLOMMHA FREDNIS!" motion roared in his ears.

It was a figure with its back to him, vanishing down the corridor; a figure with a copper cauldron of provisions over its shoulder; a figure darting, floating, squirming through free fall. It was Gully Foyle.

"MEEHAT JESSROT," the sight of his motion bellowed in deafening capital letters.

"Aha! Oh-ho! M'git not to kak," the flicker of light and shade answered.

"Ooooooh? Soooooo?" the whirling raffle of debris in his wake murmured.

The lemon taste in his mouth became unbearable. The rake of talons on his skin was tearing torture.

He jaunted.

He reappeared in the furnace beneath Old St. Pat's less than a second after he had disappeared from there. He was drawn, as the seabird is drawn again and again to the flames from which it is struggling to escape. He endured the roaring torture for only another moment.

He jaunted.

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He was in the depths of Gouffre Martel.

The velvet black darkness was bliss, paradise, euphoria.

"Ah!" he cried in relief.

"AH!" came the echo of his voice, and the sound was translated into a blinding pattern of light.

AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

The burning man winced. "Stop!" he called, blinded by the noise.

StOpStOpStOp

OpStOpStOpStOp

StOpStOpStOpStOp

OpStOpStOpStOpStOp

OpStOpStOpStOpSt

OpStOpStOpStOp

OpStOpStOpSt

A distant clatter of steps came to his eyes in soft patterns of vertical borealis streamers:

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t t t t t t
t t t t t t
e e e e e e
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A BEAM OF LIGHT ATTACKED

It was the search party from the Gouffre Martel hospital, tracking Foyle and Jisbella McQueen by geophone. The burning man disappeared, but not before he had unwittingly decoyed the searchers from the trail of the vanished fugitives.

He was back under Old St. Pat's, reappearing only an instant after his last disappearance. His wild beatings into the unknown sent him stumbling up geodesic space-time lines that inevitably brought him back to the Now he was trying to escape; for in the inverted saddle-curve of space-time, his Now was the deepest depression in the curve.

He could drive himself up, up, up the geodesic lines into the past or future, but inevitably he must fall back into his own Now, like a thrown ball hurled up the sloping walls of an infinite pit, to land, hang poised for a moment, and then roll back into the depths.

But still he beat into the unknown in his desperation.

Again he jaunted.

He was on Jervis beach on the Australian coast.

The motion of the surf was bawling: "LOGGERMIST CROTEHAVEN!"

The churning of the surf blinded him with the lights of batteries of footlights:

****
****
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Gully Foyle and Robin Wednesbury stood before him. The body of a man lay on the sand, which felt like vinegar on the burning man's tongue. The wind brushing his fact tasted like brown paper.

Foyle opened his mouth and exclaimed. The sound came out in burning, babbling, burbling star-bubbles.

Foyle took a step. "GRASH?" the motion blared.

The deafened burning man jaunted.

He was in the office of Dr. Sergei Orel in Shanghai.

Foyle was again before him, speaking in light patterns:

```
W A Y      W A Y  W A Y

 H R O    H R O    H R O

  O E U  O E U      O E U
```

He flickered back to the agony of Old St. Pat's and jaunted again.

```
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
X                        X
X  HE WAS ON THE BRAW-   X
X  LING SPANISH STAIRS.  X
X  HE WAS ON THE BRAW-   X
X  LING SPANISH STAIRS.  X
X  HE WAS ON THE BRAW-   X
X  LING SPANISH STAIRS.  X
X  HE WAS ON THE BRAW-   X
X  LING SPANISH STAIRS.  X
X                        X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
```

The burning man jaunted.

It was cold again, with the taste of lemons, and vacuum raked his skin with unspeakable talons.

He was peering in pain through the porthole of a silvery yawl. The jagged mountains of the Moon towered in the background. Through the porthole, he could see the jangling racket of blood-pumps and oxygen-pumps and hear the uproar of the motion Gully Foyle made toward him. The clawing of the vacuum caught his throat in an agonizing grip.

The geodesic lines of space-time rolled him back to Now under Old St. Pat's, where less than two seconds had elapsed since he first began his frenzied struggle. Once more, like a burning spear, he hurled himself into the unknown.

He was in the Skoptsy Catacomb on Mars. The white slug that was Lindsey Joyce was writhing in shrill terror before him.

"NO! NO! NO!" her motion screamed. "DON'T HURT ME. DON'T KILL ME. PLEASE . . . PLEASE . . . PLEASE DON'T HURT ME . . ."

The burning man opened his tiger mouth and laughed. "She hurts," he said. The sound of his voice burned his eyes with flaming gravel.

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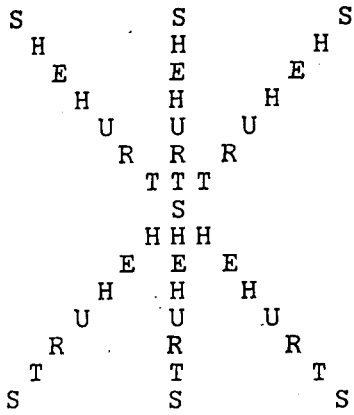

"Who are you?" Foyle whispered.

WWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW
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HHHHH
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AREAREAREAREAREARE
AREAREAREAREAREARE
AREAREAREAREAREARE
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YYYYY
0000000000000
00000
UUUUUUUUUUUUU
UUUUU

The burning man winced. "Too bright," he said. "Less light."

Foyle took a step forward. "BLAA-GAA-DAA-MAWW!" the motion roared.

The burning man clapped his hands over his ears in agony. "Too loud! Don't move so loud!"

The writhing Skoptsy's motion was still screaming, beseeching: "DON'T HURT ME. DON'T HURT ME."

The burning man laughed again. She was mute to normal men, but to his freak crossed senses, her meaning was clear. "Listen to her. She's screaming. Begging. She doesn't want to die. She doesn't want to be hurt. Listen to her."

"IT WAS OLIVIA PRESTEIGN GAVE THE ORDER. NOT ME. DON'T HURT ME. OLIVIA PRESTEIGN."

"She's telling who gave the order. Can't you hear? Listen with your eyes. She says Olivia."

WHAT? WHAT? WHAT?

WHAT? WHAT? WHAT?

WHAT? WHAT? WHAT?

WHAT? WHAT? WHAT?

WHAT? WHAT? WHAT?

The checkerboard glitter of Foyle's question was too much for him. The Burning Man interpreted the Skoptsy's agony again.

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"She says Olivia. Olivia Presteign. Olivia Presteign. Olivia Presteign."

He jaunted.

FOYLE fell back into the pit under Old St. Pat's and suddenly his confusion and despair told him he was dead. This was the finish of Gully Foyle. This was eternity and hell was real. What he had seen was the past passing before his crumbling senses in the final moment of death. What he was enduring, he must endure through all time. He was dead. He knew he was dead.

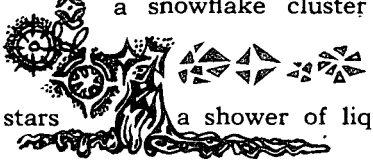
He refused to submit to eternity.

He beat again into the unknown.

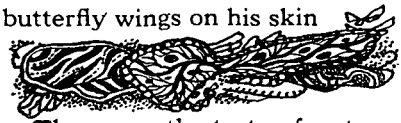
The burning man jaunted.

He was in a scintillating mist

a snowflake cluster of



stars a shower of liquid diamonds. There was the touch of butterfly wings on his skin



There was the taste of a strand of cool pearls in his mouth

His crossed kaleidoscopic senses could not tell him where he was, but he knew he wanted to remain in this Nowhere forever.

"Hello, Gully."

"Who's that?"

"This is Robin."

"Robin?"

"Robin Wednesbury that was."

"That was?"

"Robin Yeovil that is."

"I don't understand. Am I dead?"

"No, Gully."

"Where am I?"

"A long, long way from Old St. Pat's."

"But where?"

"I can't take the time to explain, Gully. You've only got a few moments here."

"Why?"

"Because you haven't learned how to jaunte through space-time yet. You've got to go back and learn."

"But I do know. I must know. Sheffield said I space-jaunted to *Nomad* — six hundred thousand miles."

"That was an accident then, Gully, and you'll do it again — after you teach yourself. But you're not doing it now. You don't know how to hold on yet — how to turn any Now into reality. You'll tumble back into Old St. Pat's in a moment."

"Robin, I've just remembered. I have bad news for you."

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"I know, Gully."

"Your mother and sisters are dead."

"I've known for a long time, Gully."

"How long?"

"For thirty years."

"That's impossible."

"No, it isn't. This is a long, long way from Old St. Pat's. I've been waiting to tell you how to save yourself from the fire, Gully. Will you listen?"

"I'm not dead?"

"No."

"I'll listen."

"Your senses are all confused. It'll pass soon, but I won't give the directions in left and right or up and down. I'll tell you what you can understand now."

"Why are you helping me—after what I've done to you?"

"That's all forgiven and forgotten, Gully. Now listen to me. When you get back to Old St. Pat's, turn around until you're facing the loudest shadows. Got that?"

"Yes."

"Go toward the noise until you feel a deep prickling on your skin. Then stop."

"Then stop."

"Make a half turn into compression and a feeling of falling. Follow that."

"Follow that."

"You'll pass through a solid sheet of light and come to the

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taste of quinine. That's really a mass of wire. Push straight through the quinine until you see something that sounds like trip-hammers. You'll be safe."

"How do you know all this, Robin?"

"I've been briefed by an expert, Gully." There was the sensation of laughter. *"You'll be falling back into the past any moment now. Peter and Saul are here. They say au revoir and good luck. And Jiz Dagenham, too. Good luck, Gully dear."*

"The past? This is the future?"

"Yes, Gully."

"Am I here? Is Olivia — ?"

And then he was tumbling down, down, down the space-time lines back into the dreadful pit of Now.

16

HIS senses uncrossed in the ivory-and-gold Star Chamber of Castle Presteign. Sight became sight and he saw the high mirrors and stained-glass windows; the gold-tooled library with android librarian on library ladder. Sound became sound and he heard the android secretary tapping the manual bead-recorder at the Louis Quinze desk. Taste became taste as he sipped the cognac that the robot bartender handed him.

He knew he was at bay, faced with the decision of his life. He ignored his enemies and examined the perpetual friendly smile carved in the robot face of the bartender.

"Thank you," Foyle said.

"My pleasure, sir," the robot replied and awaited its next cue.

"Nice day," Foyle remarked.

"Always a lovely day somewhere, sir," the robot beamed.

"Awful day," Foyle said.

"Always a lovely day somewhere, sir," the robot repeated.

"Day," Foyle said.

"Always a lovely day somewhere, sir," the robot said again.

Foyle turned to the others. "That's me," he said, motioning to the robot. "That's all of us. We prattle about free will, but we're nothing but response, mechanical reaction in prescribed grooves. So — here I am, waiting to respond. Press the buttons and I'll jump." He aped the canned voice of the robot. "My pleasure to serve, sir." Suddenly his tone lashed them. "What do you want?"

They stirred with uneasy purpose. Foyle was burned, beaten, chastened — and yet he was taking control of all of them.

"We'll stipulate the threats," Foyle said. "I'm to be hanged, ripped, shredded, tortured in hell if I don't — if I don't what? What do you want?"

"I want my property," Pres-

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teign said, smiling coldly.

"Eighteen and some odd pounds of PyrE. Yes. What do you offer?"

"I make no offer, sir. I demand what is mine."

Y'ang-Yeovil and Dagenham began to speak. Foyle silenced them. "One button at a time, gentlemen. Presteign is trying to make me jump at present." He turned to Presteign. "Press harder, blood and money, or find another button. Who are you to make demands now?"

Presteign tightened his lips. "The law—"

"What? Threats?" Foyle laughed. "Am I to be frightened into anything? Don't be an imbecile. Speak to me the way you did New Year's Eve, Presteign—without mercy, without forgiveness, without hypocrisy."

PRESTEIGN bowed, took a breath and ceased to smile. "I offer you power," he said. "Adoption as my heir, partnership in Presteign Enterprises, the chieftainship of clan and sept. Together we can own the world—the Solar System."

"With PyrE?"

"Yes."

"Your proposal is noted and declined. Will you offer your daughter?"

"Olivia?" Presteign choked and clenched his fists.

"Yes, Olivia. Where is she?"

"You scum!" Presteign cried. "Filth! Common thief! You dare to—"

"Will you offer your daughter for the PyrE?"

"Yes," Presteign answered, barely audible.

Foyle turned to Dagenham. "Press your button, death's-head."

"If the discussion's to be conducted on this level—" Dagenham rapped out.

"It is. Without mercy, without forgiveness, without hypocrisy. What do you offer?"

"Glory."

"Ah?"

"We can't offer money or power. We *can* offer honor. Gully Foyle, the man who saved the Inner Planets from annihilation. We *can* offer security. We'll wipe out your criminal record, give you an honored name, guarantee a niche in the hall of fame."

"No," Jisbella McQueen cut in sharply. "Don't accept. If you want to be a savior, destroy the secret. Don't give PyrE to anyone."

"What is PyrE?"

"Quiet!" Dagenham snapped.

"It's a thermo-nuclear explosive that's detonated by thought alone—by psychokinesis," Jisbella said.

"What thought?"

"The desire of anyone to detonate it, directed at it. That brings it to critical mass if it's not insu-

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lated by Inert Lead Isomer."

"I told you to be quiet," Dagenham growled.

"If we're all to have a chance at him, I want mine."

"This is bigger than idealism."

"Nothing's bigger than idealism."

"Foyle's secret is," Y'ang-Yeovil murmured. "I know how relatively unimportant PyrE is just now." He smiled at Foyle. "Sheffield's law assistant overheard part of your little discussion in Old St. Pat's. We know about the space-jaunting."

THERE was a sudden hush.

"Space-jaunting!" Dagenham exclaimed. "Impossible! You don't mean it!"

"I do mean it. Foyle's demonstrated that space-jaunting is not impossible. He jaunted six hundred thousand miles from an O.S. raider to the wreck of the *Nomad*. As I said, this is far bigger than PyrE. I should like to discuss that matter first."

"Everyone's been telling what they want," Robin Wednesbury said slowly. "What do you want, Gully Foyle?"

"Thank you," Foyle answered. "I want to be punished."

"What?"

"I want to be purged," he said in a suffocated voice. The stigmata began to appear on his bandaged face. "I want to pay for what I've done and settle the account. I want to go back to Gouffre Martel. I want a lobo, if I deserve it—and I know I do. I want—"

"You want escape," Dagenham interrupted. "There's no escape."

"I want release!"

"Out of the question," Y'ang-Yeovil said. "There's too much of value locked up in your head to be lost by lobotomy."

"We're beyond childish things like crime and punishment," Dagenham added.

"No," Robin objected. "There must always be sin and forgiveness. We're never beyond that."

"Profit and loss, sin and forgiveness, idealism and realism." Foyle smiled. "You're all so sure, so simple, so single-minded. I'm the only one in doubt. Let's see how sure you really are. You'll give up Olivia, Presteign? To me, yes? Will you give her up to the law? She's a killer."

Presteign tried to rise, and then fell back in his chair.

"There must be forgiveness, Robin? Will you forgive Olivia Presteign? She murdered your mother and sisters."

Robin turned ashen. Y'ang-Yeovil tried to protest.

"The Outer Satellites don't have PyrE, Yeovil. Sheffield revealed that. Would you use it on them anyway? Will you turn my name into common anathema—

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like Lynch and Boycott?"

Foyle turned to Jisbella. "Will your idealism take you back to Gouffre Martel to serve out your sentence? And you, Dagenham, are you willing to give her up? Let her go?"

HE LISTENED to the protests and watched the confusion for a moment, bitter and constrained.

"This decision is so simple, isn't it? Am I to respect Presteign's property rights? The welfare of the planets? Jisbella's ideals? Dagenham's realism? Robin's conscience? Press the button and watch the robot jump. But I'm not a robot. I'm a freak of the Universe — a thinking animal — and I'm trying to think my way through this morass. Am I to turn PyrE over to the world and let it destroy itself? Am I to teach the world how to space-jaunte and let us spread our freak show from galaxy to galaxy through all the Universe? What's the answer?"

The bartender robot hurled its mixing glass across the room with a resounding crash. In the amazed silence that followed, Dagenham grunted: "Damn! My radioactivity's disrupted your servants again, Presteign."

"The answer is yes," the robot said, quite distinctly.

"What?" Foyle asked, taken aback.

"The answer to your question is yes."

"Thank you," Foyle said.

"My pleasure, sir," the robot responded. "A man is a member of society first and an individual second. You must go along with society, whether it chooses destruction or not."

"Completely haywire," Dagenham said impatiently. "Switch it off, Presteign."

"Wait," Foyle commanded. He looked at the beaming grin engraved in the steel robot face. "But society can be so stupid, so confused."

"Yes, sir, but you must teach, not dictate. You must teach society."

"To space-jaunte? Why? Why reach out to the stars and galaxies? What for?"

"Because you're alive, sir. You might as well ask: why is life? Don't ask about it. Live it."

"Quite mad," Dagenham snapped.

"But fascinating," Y'ang-Yeovil murmured.

"There's got to be more to life than just living," Foyle said to the robot.

"Then find it for yourself, sir. Don't ask the world to stop moving because you have doubts."

"Why can't we all move forward together?"

"Because you're all different. Some must lead, and hope that

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the rest will eventually follow."

"Who leads?"

"The men who must—driven men, compelled men."

"Freak men."

"You're all freaks, sir. But you always have been. Life is a freak. That's its hope and glory."

"Thank you very much."

"My pleasure, sir."

"You've saved the day."

"Always a lovely day somewhere, sir," the robot beamed. Then it fizzed, jangled and collapsed.

FOYLE turned on the others. "That thing's right and you're wrong. Who are we, any of us, to make a decision for mankind? Let mankind know and decide for itself. Come to Old St. Pat's."

He jaunted; they followed. The square block was still cordoned and by now an enormous crowd had gathered. So many of the rash and curious were jaunting into the smoking ruins that the police had set up a protective induction field to keep them out. Even so, urchins, curio-seekers and irresponsibles attempted to jaunte into the wreckage, only to be burned by the induction field and depart, squawking.

At a signal from Y'ang-Yeovil, the field was turned off. Foyle went through the hot rubble to the east wall of the cathedral, which stood to a height of fifteen feet. He felt the smoking stones, pressed and levered. There came a grinding grumble and a three-by-five-foot section jarred open and then stuck.

Foyle gripped it and pulled. The section trembled; then the roasted hinges collapsed and the stone panel crumbled.

Two centuries before, when organized religion had been abolished and orthodox worshipers of all faiths had been driven underground, some devout souls had constructed this secret niche in Old St. Pat's and turned it into an

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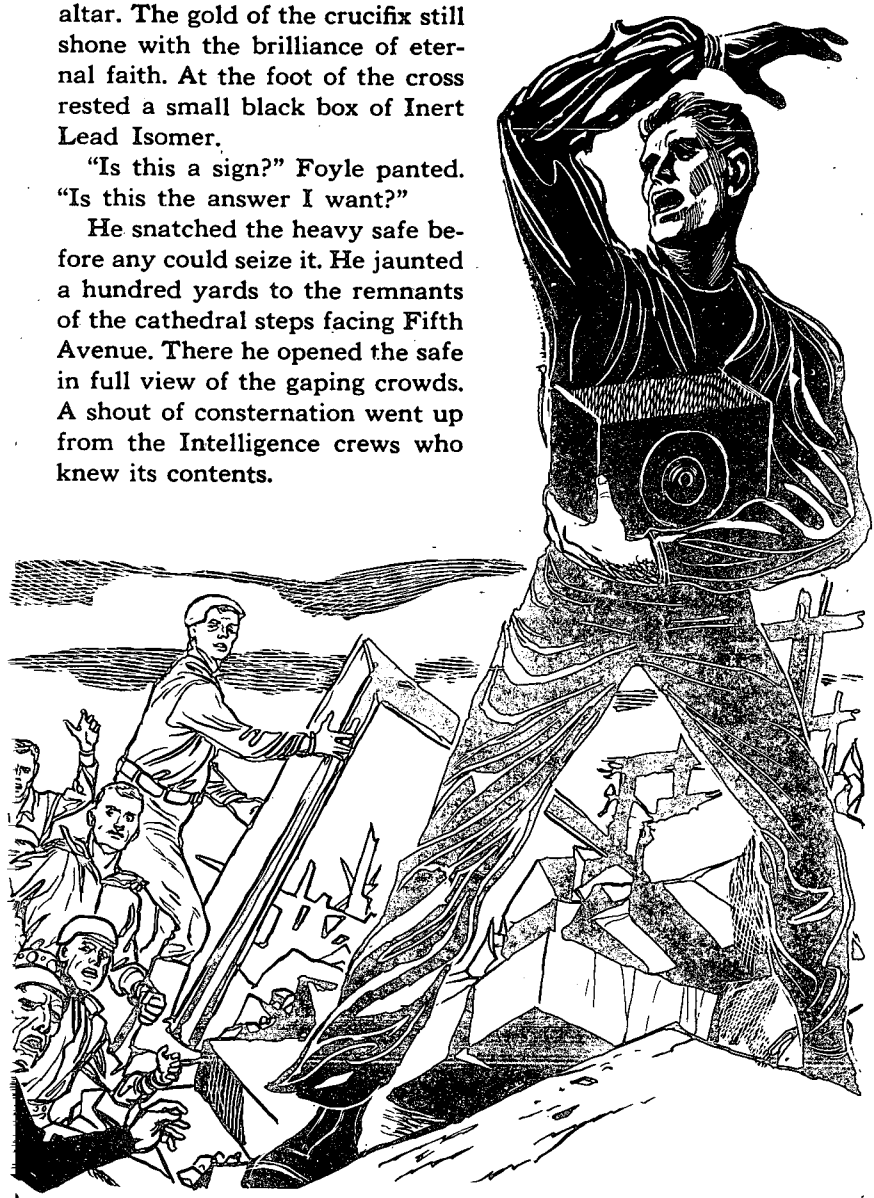
altar. The gold of the crucifix still shone with the brilliance of eternal faith. At the foot of the cross rested a small black box of Inert Lead Isomer.

"Is this a sign?" Foyle panted. "Is this the answer I want?"

He snatched the heavy safe before any could seize it. He jaunted a hundred yards to the remnants of the cathedral steps facing Fifth Avenue. There he opened the safe in full view of the gaping crowds. A shout of consternation went up from the Intelligence crews who knew its contents.



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"Foyle!" Dagenham cried.

"For God's sake, Foyle!" Y'ang-Yeovil begged.

Foyle withdrew a slug of PyrE, the color of iodine crystals, the size of a cigarette — one pound of trans-Plutonian isotopes in solid solution.

"PyrE!" he roared to the mob. "Take it! Keep it. It's your future. PyrE!" He hurled the slug into the crowd and yelled over his shoulder: "SanFran. Russian Hill stage."

He jaunted St. Louis-Denver to San Francisco, arriving at the Russian Hill stage, where it was four in the afternoon and the streets were bustling with late-shopper jaunters.

"PyrE!" Foyle bellowed. His devil-face glowed blood red. He was an appalling sight. "PyrE. It's danger. It's death. It's yours. Make them tell you what it is. Nome!" he called to his pursuit as it arrived, and jaunted.

IT WAS lunch hour in Nome and the lumberjacks jaunting down from the sawmills for their beefsteak and beer were startled by the tiger-faced man who hurled a one-pound slug of iodine-colored alloy into their midst and shouted in the gutter tongue: "PyrE! You hear me, man? You listen a me, you. PyrE is filthy death for us. All a us! Grab no guesses, you. Make 'em tell you about PyrE, is all! You hear me?"

To Dagenham, Y'ang-Yeovil and others jaunting in after him, as always, seconds too late, he shouted: "Tokyo. Imperial stage!" He disappeared a split-second before their shots reached him.

It was nine o'clock of a crisp, winy morning in Tokyo and the morning rush-hour crowd milling around the Imperial stage alongside the carp ponds was paralyzed by a tiger-faced Samurai who appeared and hurled a slug of curious metal and unforgettable warnings and admonitions at them.

Foyle continued to Bangkok where it was pouring rain, and Delhi where a monsoon raged — always pursued in his mad-dog course. In Baghdad, it was three in the morning and the nightclub crowd and pub-crawlers who stayed a perpetual half hour ahead of closing time around the world cheered him alcoholically. In Paris and again in London, it was midnight and the mobs on the Champs Elysees and in Piccadilly Circus were galvanized by Foyle's appearance and passionate exhortation.

Having led his pursuers three-quarters of the way around the world in fifty minutes, Foyle permitted them to overtake him in London. He let them knock him down, take the ILI safe from his arms, count the remaining slugs

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of PyrE, and slam the safe shut.

"There's enough left for a war. Plenty left for destruction . . . annihilation . . . if you dare." Foyle was laughing and sobbing in hysterical triumph. "Millions for defense, but not one cent for survival."

"D'you realize what you've done, you damned killer?" Dagenham shouted.

"I know what I've done."

"Nine pounds of PyrE scattered around the world! One thought and we'll — How can we get it back without telling them the truth? Yeo, keep that crowd back. Don't let them hear this."

"Impossible."

"Then let's jaunte."

"No," Foyle roared. "Let them hear this. Let them hear everything."

"You're insane, man. You've handed a loaded gun to children."

"Stop treating them like children and they'll stop behaving like children. Who the hell are you to play monitor?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Stop treating them like children. Explain the loaded gun to them. Bring it all out into the open."

FOYLE laughed savagely. "I've ended the last Star Chamber Conference in the world. No more secrets from now on. No more telling the children what's best for them to know. Let 'em all grow up. It's about time."

"Christ, he *is* insane."

"Am I? I've handed life and death back to the people who do the living and dying. They've been whipped and led long enough by driven men like us — compulsive men — tiger men who can't help lashing the world before them. We're all tigers, the three of us, but who the hell are we to make decisions for the world just because we're compulsive? Let the world make its own choice between life and death. Why should we be saddled with the responsibility?"

"We're not saddled," Y'ang-Yeovil said quietly. "We're forced to seize the responsibility that the average man shirks."

"Then let him stop shirking it. Let him stop tossing his duty and guilt onto the shoulders of the first freak who comes along grabbing at it. Are we to be scapegoats for the world forever?"

"Damn you!" Dagenham raged. "Don't you realize that you can't trust people? They don't know enough for their own good."

"Then let them learn or die. We're all in this together. Let's live together or die together."

"D'you want to die because of their ignorance? You've got to figure out how we can get those slugs back without blowing everything wide open."

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"No. I was one of them before I turned tiger. They can all turn uncommon if they're kicked awake the way I was."

Foyle shook himself and abruptly jaunted to the bronze head of Eros, fifty feet above the counter of Piccadilly Circus. He perched precariously and bawled: "Listen a me, all you! Listen, man! Gonna sermonize, me. Dig this, you!"

He was answered with a roar.

"You pigs, you. You goof like pigs, is all. You got the most in you and you use the least. You hear me, you? Got a million in you and spend pennies. Got a genius in you and think crazies. Got a heart in you and feel empties. All a you—"

He was jeered. He continued with the hysterical passion of the possessed.

"Take a war to make you spend. Take a jam to make you think. Take a challenge to make you great. Rest of the time you sit around lazy, you. Pigs, you! All right, damn you! I challenge you, me. Die or live and be great. Blow yourselves to Christ gone or come and find me, Gully Foyle, and I make you men. I make you great. I give you the stars."

He disappeared.

HE JAUNTED up the geodesic lines of space-time to an Elsewhere and an Elsewhen. He arrived in chaos. He hung in a precarious para-Now for a moment and then tumbled back into chaos.

"It can be done," he thought. *"It must be done."*

He jaunted again, a burning spear flung from unknown into unknown, and again he tumbled back into a chaos of para-space and para-time. He was lost in Nowhere.

"I believe," he thought. *"I have faith."*

He jaunted again and failed again.

"Faith in what?" he asked himself, adrift in limbo.

"Faith in faith," he answered himself. *"It isn't necessary to have something to believe in. It's only necessary to believe that somewhere there's something worthy of belief."*

He jaunted for the last time and the power of his willingness to believe transformed the para-Now for his random destination into a real . . .

* * *

NOW: Rigel in Orion, burning blue-white, five hundred and forty light-years from Earth, ten thousand times more luminous than the Sun, a cauldron of energy circled by thirty-seven massive planets . . .

Foyle hung, freezing and suffocating in space, face to face with the incredible destiny in which

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he believed, but which was still inconceivable. He hung in space for a blinding moment, as helpless, as amazed, and yet as inevitable as the first gilled creature to come out of the sea and hang gulping on a primeval beach in the dawn-history of life on Earth.

He space-jaunted, turning para-Now into . . .

* * *

NOW: Vega in Lyra, an AO star twenty-six light-years from Earth, burning bluer than Rigel, planetless, but circled by swarms of blazing comets whose gaseous tails scintillated across the blue-black firmament . . .

* * *

And again he turned now into **NOW:** Canopus, yellow as the Sun, gigantic, thunderous in the silent wastes of space at last invaded by a creature that once was gilled. The creature hung gulping on the beach of the Universe, nearer death than life, nearer the future than the past, ten leagues beyond the wide world's end. It wondered at the masses of dust, meteors and motes that girdled Canopus in a broad flat ring like the rings of Saturn and of the breadth of Saturn's orbit . . .

* * *

NOW: Aldebaran in Taurus, a monstrous red star of a pair of stars whose sixteen planets wove high velocity ellipses around their gyrating parents. He was hurling himself through space-time with growing assurance . . .

* * *

NOW: Antares, an M1 red giant, paired like Aldebaran, two hundred and fifty light-years from Earth, circled by two hundred and fifty planetoids of the size of Mercury, of the climate of Eden . . .

* * *

AND LASTLY NOW . . .

He was drawn to the womb of his birth. He returned to the *Nomad,* now welded into the mass of the Sargasso Asteroid, home of the lost Scientific People who scavenged the spaceways between Mars and Jupiter—home of J♂seph, who had tattooed Foyle's tiger face and mated him to M♀ira.

He was back aboard *Nomad.*

Gully Foyle is my name
And Terra is my nation.
Deep space is my dwelling place,
The stars my destination.

THE girl, M♀ira, found him in his tool locker aboard *Nomad,* curled in a tight fetal ball, his face hollow, his eyes burning with divine revelation. Although the asteroid had long since been repaired and made airtight, Foyle still went through the motions of the perilous existence that had

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given birth to him years before.

But now he slept and meditated, digesting and encompassing the magnificence he had learned. He awoke from reverie to trance and drifted out of the locker, passing M♀ira with blind eyes, brushing past the awed girl who stepped aside and sank to her knees. He wandered through the empty passages and returned to the womb of the locker. He curled up again and was lost.

She touched him once. He made no move. She spoke the name that had been emblazoned on his face. He made no answer. She turned and fled to the interior of the asteroid, to the holy of holies in which J♂seph reigned.

"My husband has returned to us," M♀ira said.

"Your husband?"

"The god-man who almost destroyed us."

J♂seph's face darkened with anger. "Where is he? Show me!"

"You will not hurt him?"

"All debts must be paid. Show me."

J♂seph followed her to the locker aboard *Nomad* and gazed intently at Foyle. The anger in his face was replaced by wonder. He touched Foyle and spoke to him. There was still no response.

"You cannot punish him," M♀ira said. "He is dying."

"No," J♂seph answered quietly. "He is dreaming. I, a priest, know these dreams. Presently he will awaken and read to us, his people, his thoughts."

"And then you will punish him."

"He has found it already in himself," J♂seph said.

He settled down outside the locker.

The girl, M♀ira, ran up the twisted corridors and returned moments later with a silver basin of warm water and a silver tray of food. She bathed Foyle gently and set the tray before him as an offering.

Then she settled down alongside J♂seph . . . alongside the world . . . prepared to await the awakening.

— ALFRED BESTER

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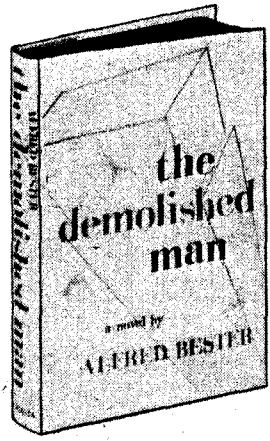

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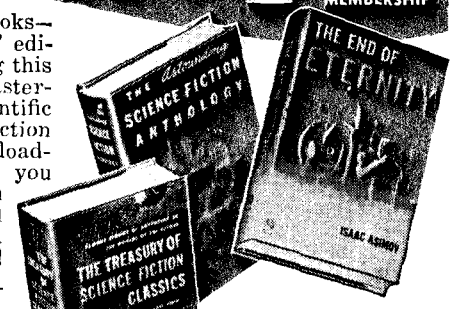

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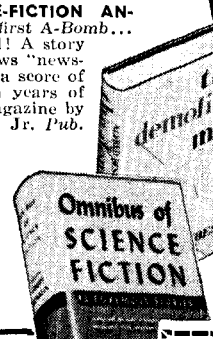

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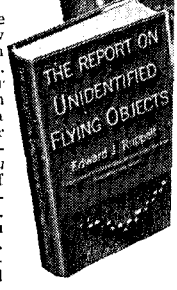

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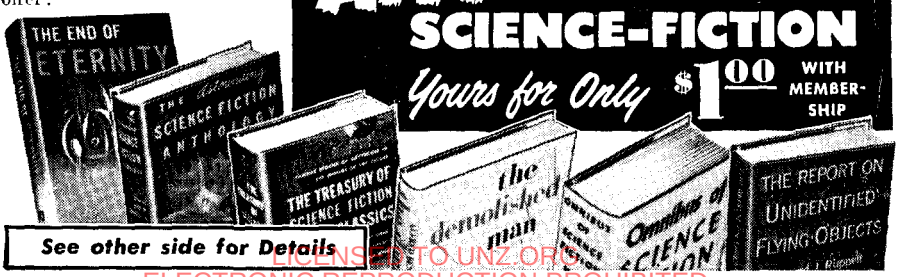
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